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OMNIBUS VOLUME SIX

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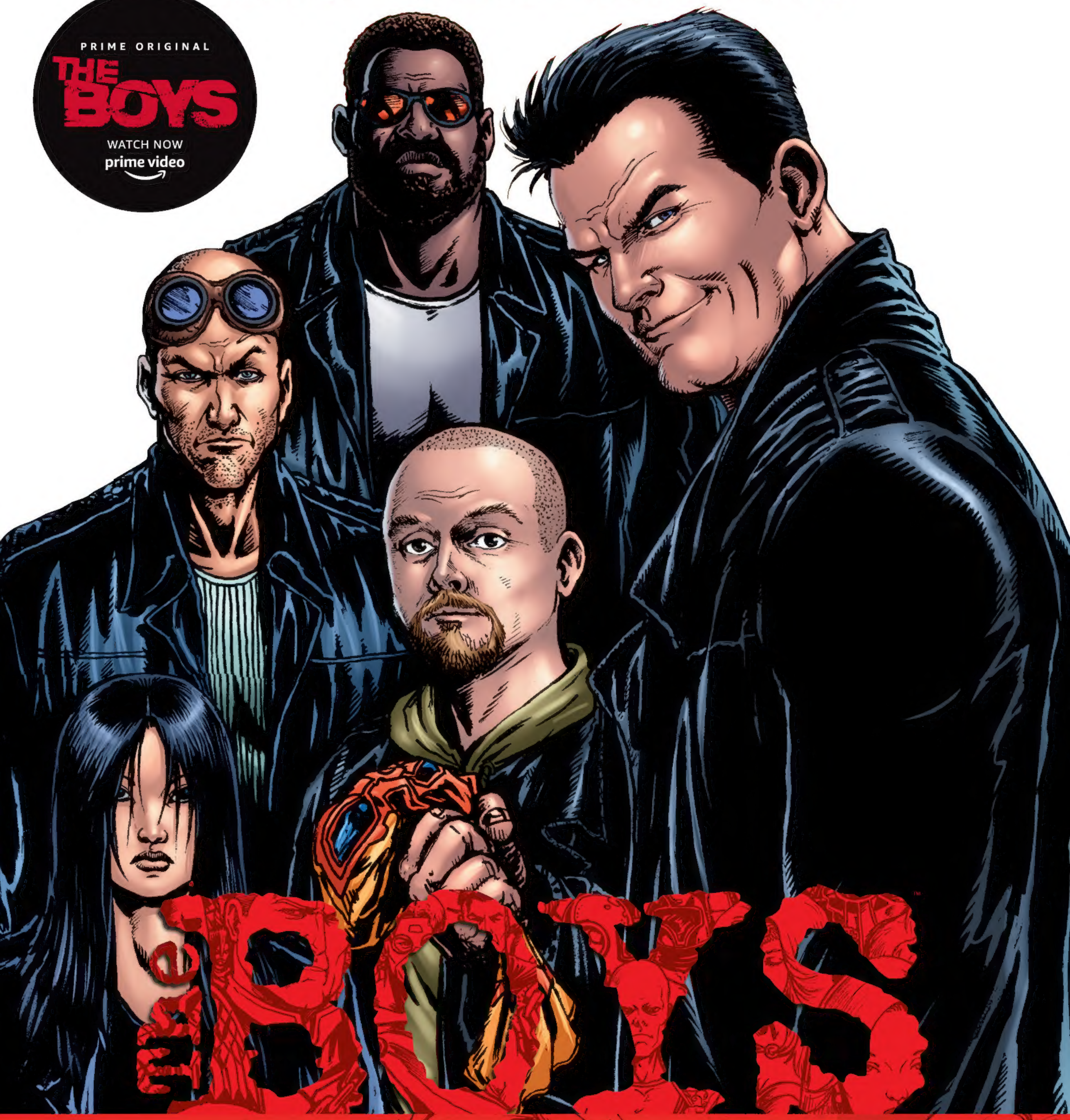

THE BOYS

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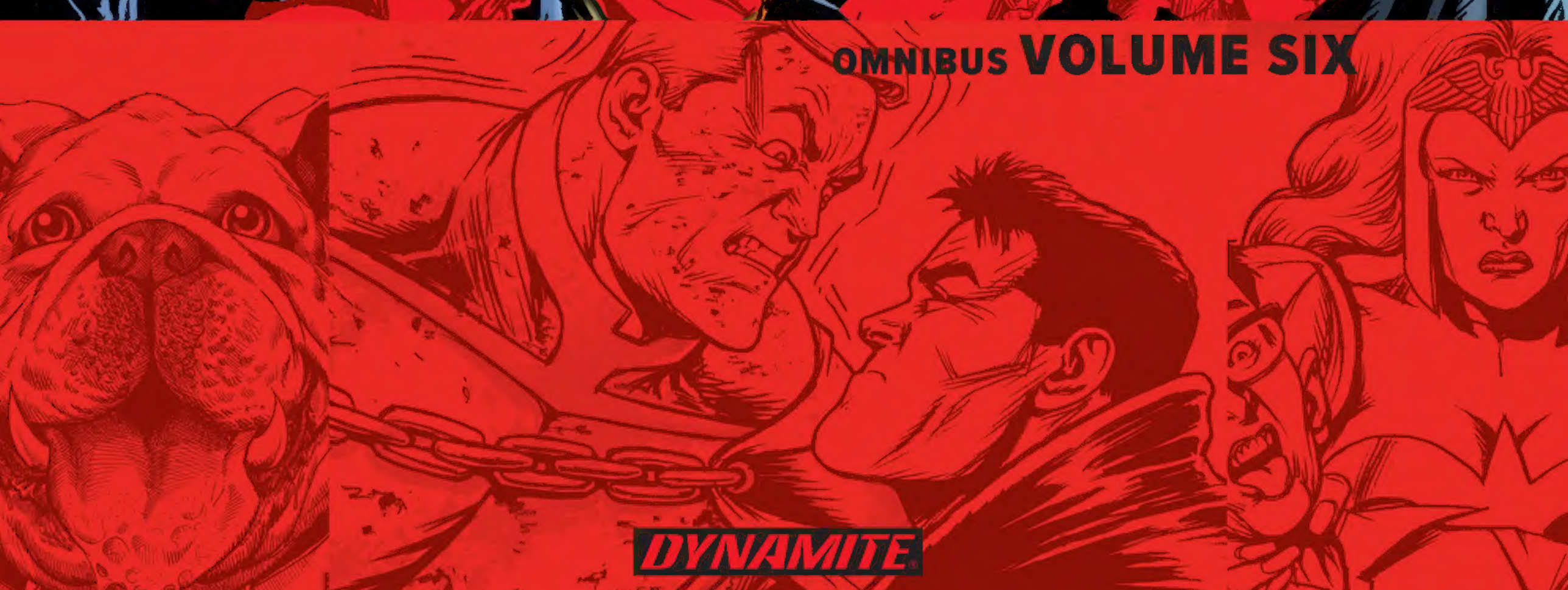

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The BOYS™

OMNIBUS

VOLUME SIX

The BOYS™

OMNIBUS VOLUME SIX

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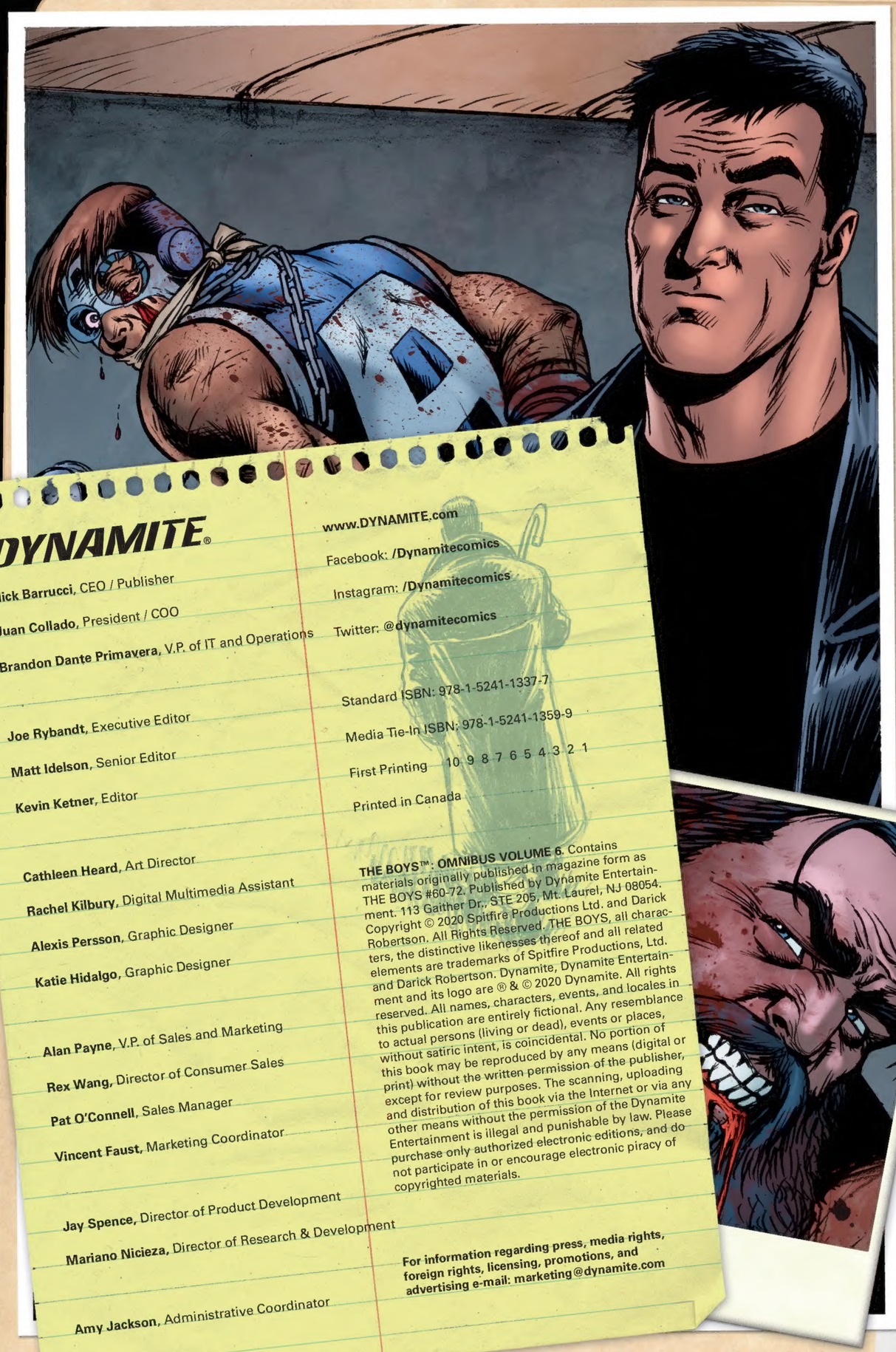

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ONE LAST TIME

TV show tie-in editions (in stores now!)

As this is the last collection of *The Boys*– until the ~~20th anniversary gold-plated rip-off special edition~~, of course– it seems appropriate to jot down a few final thoughts on the series, just before we switch off the lights and close the door on Hughie, Butcher and the rest of them once and for all. One question I'm often asked is which I'm more fond of, *The Boys* or *Preacher*, being that these are the two half-decade long epics with which I've made my name (I always mentally add *Hitman* to the query, partly because it fits the criteria too, partly because I can't consider the other two without it in this context).

And the simple answer is that I can't decide, because I love all three of them equally. Whether it's *Preacher* looking us right in the eye in its forthright, honorable way, *Hitman* grinning at us over at beer, or *The Boys* smirking from the shadows of some grimy alleyway, there isn't one of them I'd ever choose over the others. What I can tell you is that *The Boys* has stayed with me in a way the other two haven't– of which more later.

It was a long, strange run. We switched publishers after six issues, which was a new one on me, and it's worth taking the time to thank Jim Lee, Scott Dunbier and Ben Abernathy again, just for making the transition as painless as it was. Once at Dynamite we found ourselves in the capable hands of Nicky Barrucci and Joe Rybandt, whose patience and grace under pressure kept us on track for the rest of the book's run. Jason Ullmeyer's the man who made our collections look as good as they do, and the rest of the Dynamite crew did what had to be done to get *The Boys* in front of its audience. My thanks to all of them.

Thanks also to Darick Robertson for kicking things off and to Russ Braun for bringing us home, and to Peter Snejbjerg, John Higgins, Carlos Ezquerra and especially John McCrea and Keith Burns, all of whom took up the slack when time grew tight. Simon Bowland lettered and Tony Avina colored every issue, and both did it in fine style, so thanks are due to them, too. And there's one final thank you: to you, the reader. It's because of you sticking with us and supporting the book that we were able to finish the story as intended (I had a hunch you would, you being such a decent spud and all).

I miss writing *The Boys*. I miss Butcher in particular; Billy and his crackerjack of a wife, Becky, pretty much vie for the position of my all-time favorite character from the many I've created over the years. If I'm honest, I sometimes find myself wishing they and the others were still around. And that, perhaps, is why *The Boys* resonates with me just that little bit more than the other series I mentioned: because whereas the characters in *Preacher* got their happy ending, and those in *Hitman* a bittersweet but fitting one (live by the gun, etc), what happened to the Boys in their last storyline still haunts me slightly.

It was where the story was meant to go, but man, it felt like murder.

- Garth Ennis
New York City
June 2013 (for *The Boys Definitive Edition Vol. 6*)

#60 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

OVER THE HILL WITH THE SWORDS OF A THOUSAND MEN

part one

COME ON THEN, TERROR.

OFF WE GO, MATE.

AH, FUCK.

JUST KEEP HIM AWAY FROM ME.

WE ALWAYS DO, MISTER PRESIDENT.

NO, YOU ALWAYS TRY. BUT SOMEHOW THE LITTLE GOON BREAKS THROUGH THE DEFENSES...OH, I'M GETTING A HEADACHE JUST THINKING ABOUT HIM...

TOP DRAWER, SIR.

ISN'T THE WHOLE IDEA TO KEEP THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE-PRESIDENT APART AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE? ISN'T THAT ONE OF THE BASIC SECURITY PRECEPTS?

NOT ALWAYS THAT SIMPLE, SIR. HIS OFFICE IS IN THE SAME BUILDING, AFTER ALL.

YES, BUT...OH, WELL.

WHAT'S THIS CIRCUS ACT THIS MORNING AGAIN?

AH, YOU'RE NOT FAR OFF THE MARK, MISTER PRESIDENT. THE ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL PETS.

SPECIAL? RETARDED?

JUST UNUSUAL. A KID WITH AN ARMADILLO. A LITTLE GIRL WITH A PEREGRINE FALCON.

THESE DAYS IT ALWAYS SEEMS TO MEAN RETARDED.

WHAT'S THE DOG CALLED AGAIN?

MM? OH. MISTER FUZZY-BUZZY, SIR.

MISTER FUZZY-BUZZY...

SPEAKING OF SECURITY, HAS THERE BEEN ANY PROGRESS ON...?

OH, LORD.

I'M SORRY, SIR.

OUR INVESTIGATION INTO THE SECRET SERVICE HAS GONE ABOUT AS FAR AS IT CAN. I CAN SAY WITH COMPLETE CERTAINTY THAT WE'VE MANAGED TO BLOCK RED RIVER PERSONNEL FROM GETTING ONTO YOUR DETAIL--BECAUSE WE'VE HAD TO GET SO PARANOID IN OUR PROCEDURES THAT ***NO ONE'S*** BEEN ALLOWED TO JOIN YOUR DETAIL FOR OVER A YEAR.

AS FOR THE AGENTS ALREADY ON THE JOB, WELL, WE'RE AT THE POINT WHERE ANY ACCUSATIONS WE MIGHT MAKE WOULD BE ON EXTREMELY SHAKY LEGAL GROUND. SOMEONE SUCCESSFULLY CONTENDS A DISMISSAL...AND THE REASONS GO PUBLIC...

THE HOUSE OF CARDS COMES TUMBLING DOWN.

I AM SORRY, MISTER PRESIDENT. ALL WE CAN DO IS KEEP SWITCHING PEOPLE AROUND--WHICH NO ONE LIKES, OF COURSE, BECAUSE IT MAKES A MESS OF UNIT COHESION. BUT AT LEAST VOUGHT CAN'T MAKE ANY CONCRETE PLANS.

THAT'S OUR ONE CONSOLATION, THAT THEY'RE PROBABLY JUST AS FRUSTRATED AS WE ARE...

DOUBTFUL.

"THEY ONLY HAVE TO GET LUCKY ONCE, REMEMBER. IT DOES VERY LITTLE FOR YOUR PEACE OF MIND, KNOWING THAT THE MEN ASSIGNED TO WATCH YOUR BACK HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN *NOT* TAKING A BULLET FOR THEIR PRESIDENT."

OR EVEN IN FIRING THE DAMN THING THEMSELVES...

THEY'D *NEVER* GO THAT FAR, MISTER PRESIDENT--!

NO?

OH FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, *YOU* THROW THE STICK AND *HE* FETCHES IT! AT LEAST GET THAT MUCH RIGHT!

HHHH.

THEY CAN TRAIN HIM TO SPEAK, YOU'D THINK THEY COULD FIX THE REST OF HIM AT THE SAME TIME...

MUTHAFUCK!

GODDAMN FUCKIN' BITCH! FUCK!

LAIT DE LA MERE--!

FUCK! FUCK!

FUCKIN' WHORE!!

I'M'A KILL YOU! FUCKIN' KILL YOU, CUNT!

RRRAAAAAAHHHH!!!

JINGS.

WELL, FRED REALLY IS QUITE SOMETHING, ISN'T HE, REBECCA?

FANK OO, MISTER PWESIDENT.

YOU MUST BE VERY PROUD OF HIM. THANK YOU FOR BRINGING HIM ALONG TODAY.

'ES, MISTER PWESIDENT.

AND WHO DO WE HAVE HERE...?

I'M TOMMY AND THIS IS MY WOLVERINE, *TOMMY!*

GRRRAAAARRROOOOWWWWRRRRR

YOU NAMED HIM AFTER... YOU KNOW, HE DOESN'T LOOK VERY HAPPY, DOES HE?

GGRRRRAAAARRRRR

I THINK MAYBE WE'LL JUST LEAVE HIM IN HIS BOX FOR NOW...

GGGRRAAAAOOOOWWWWRRRR

BUT HE CERTAINLY IS AN IMPRESSIVE ANIMAL, YOU MUST BE VERY PROUD OF HIM...

MISTER FUZZY-BUZZY?

WHAT'S AFTER THIS?

GENERAL BUTLER, SIR. THIS MONTH'S FIGURES.

FROM THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE...

NINETY-EIGHT K.I.A.. NEARLY TWICE THAT WOUNDED.

OH, GOD. I DON'T SUPPOSE ANY OF THAT'S IN ACCIDENTS?

NO, SIR. THAT WOULD PUT US AROUND THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY MARK.

JESUS.

I WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING WE COULD DO TO MASSAGE THE FIGURES. EVERY TIME THERE'S BAD NEWS FROM PAKISTAN, THE VOUGHT AGENDA GETS PUSHED THAT BIT FURTHER UP THE FLAGPOLE.

NO ONE INTELLIGENT WANTS THE SEVEN DEPLOYED IN A WAR ZONE, MISTER PRESIDENT...

MISTER FUZZY-BUZZY?

GGGRRROOOOOWWWW

THAT ABOUT SUMS IT UP.

LOOK AT HIM, WILL YOU? THE REPUBLICAN TICKET FOR OH-EIGHT.

HIM AND A BAG OF DOGSHIT. GOT TO THINK ABOUT TWENTY-SIXTEEN.

OKAY, EVERYONE, THANKS FOR BRINGING ALL YOUR WONDERFUL PETS TO VISIT THE WHITE HOUSE. IT'S BEEN TERRIFFIC MEETING THEM--AND YOU.

MISTER FUZZY-BUZZY...

GGRRRR?

I HAVE TO GO RIGHT NOW, BUT BE SURE AND ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR VISIT...THERE'S PLENTY MORE TO...TO...

WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING?

GRRRRAAAARRRR!!!

F

GGRRRAAARROOOOWWWRRRR

AAAAAAAHH!

JESUS!

GGRRRRR! GGGRRRRR!

AAAH--AAK-- AAAAAAAHH--

NO-NO-NO, YOU'LL HIT HIM! YOU'LL HIT THE KIDS!

OUT! EVERYBODY OUT!

OH MY GOD--!

TOMMY!

CODE RED, RECEPTION ROOM! ROWDY YATES IS DOWN! *ROWDY YATES IS DOWN!*

LITTLE SON OF A--

GGRRRR!!

NOW! NOW! GET IT!

GGRROOW--!

GGGRRRRRRRRRRR...!

HOLY FUCKING SHIT--

OH GOD.

OH GOD.

I...

STEVE!

I GUESS YOU TWO WEREN'T RED RIVER...

NO, WE WEREN'T FUCKING GODDAMNED RED RIVER!!

SOMEONE STICK A BOTTLE IN THE PAPER RECYCLIN'?
NO...
LEAVE A LOAD O' DISHES IN THE SINK?
NON.
FORGET TO BUY BOG ROLL?
NON.
SO WHAT THE FUCK'S WRONG WITH HIM, THEN?
IT HONESTLY WASN'T ANYTHIN' LIKE THAT, HE WENT ABSOLUTELY FUCKIN' MENTAL...
HE AIN'T PICKIN' UP AN' HE AIN'T CALLED. FRENCHIE, CAN YOU GET INTO HIS EMAIL?
BIEN SUR.
D'YOU THINK SOMEBODY SENT HIM SOMETHIN'?
YOU SAID HE WAS ONLINE AT THE TIME, DIDN'T YOU?
PASSWORD'S BIGOLTITTIES, ALL ONE WORD.
OH, DID HE TELL YOU IT?
NO.
OH, SHIT. TRY THAT ONE, QUEENBEE AT MAC DOT COM.

BLACK HOLES

Angelica Vadge
Jana Sin
Julius Kong

FUCK.

WHAT...?

WELL, THE USELESS FUCKIN' CRACKHEAD CUNT SLAG HANGIN' OFF THE DICKHEAD-- THAT'S HIS WIFE.

AN' THE OTHER ONE--

AW NO, THAT'S JANINE! THAT'S HIS WEE GIRL!

THE DIRTY FUCKIN' SLAPPER'S GOT HER DOIN' MOTHER-DAUGHTER PORN.

OH, MON PAUVRE AMI...

NO WONDER HE LOST THE BLOODY HEAD!

FUCKIN' STUPID FUCKIN' WHORE.

I CAN'T BE HAVIN' THIS.

NOT NOW. NOT WITH THE FUCKIN' SEVEN ABOUT TO BOIL OVER.

I NEED HIM SWITCHED ON, NOT RUNNIN' AROUND TRYNNA SORT OUT BOLLOCKS LIKE THIS...

BE BACK TOMORROW. BELL ME IF HE TURNS UP.

HUGHIE, NIP OUTSIDE AN' GRAB ALL THE STUFF FROM HIS DESK, WILL YOU?

YOU WANT ME TO PICK UP A LOAD O' *LITTER*...?

I WANT YOU TO PICK UP TWELVE BLEEDIN' YEARS' WORTH O' GOD KNOWS FUCKIN' WHAT. BUT IF YOU'RE ALL RIGHT WITH SOME HIPSTER TWAT READIN' ALL ABOUT STORMFRONT'S LITTLE HOLIDAY IN NEW ORLEANS--YOU JUST STAY HERE AN' SIT ON YER ARSE.

GET ON WITH IT...!

UH... AYE...

GLAD TO HEAR IT.

END OF.

DAY OF MOURNING FOLLOWS BIZARRE ATTACK

V.P. NEUMAN TO BE SWORN IN IMMEDIATELY

UNCONFIRMED REPORT: CREATURE'S OWNERS REGISTERED DEMOCRATS

FOX NEWS SPECIAL PRESENTATION

...THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT HE DOES, IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE FUNNY?

GLAD WE AGREE.

NO, WE'RE NOT GOING TO SAY ANYTHING FOR THE NEXT SEVENTY-TWO HOURS, NOT BEYOND EXPRESSING OUR PROFOUND SHOCK. WE DON'T WANT *VIC THE VEEP* AND *VOUGHT-AMERICAN* EVEN APPEARING IN THE SAME SENTENCE.

THERE'S A TIME AND A PLACE. OURS WILL COME ONCE THE DUST HAS SETTLED.

BECAUSE AT THIS EXACT MOMENT EVERYONE IS TENSING, NOT LEAST OF ALL BUTCHER AND COMPANY, AND I DON'T WANT TO PRE-EMPT--YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME, I HAVE THE OTHER LINE.

MS. BRADLEY?

MM-HM. YES.

WELL, YES, IN THAT SENSE IT IS GOOD NEWS. IT'S PRECISELY THE OUTCOME WE WERE PLANNING FOR, AFTER ALL.

BUT...

IT'S JUST THAT... I'M NOT ONE TO LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH, BUT THE FACT IS THAT A COMPLEX AND EXPENSIVE PARAMILITARY OPERATION HAS BEEN RENDERED UNNECESSARY BY THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF A HALFWIT AND A CARNIVOROUS MAMMAL.

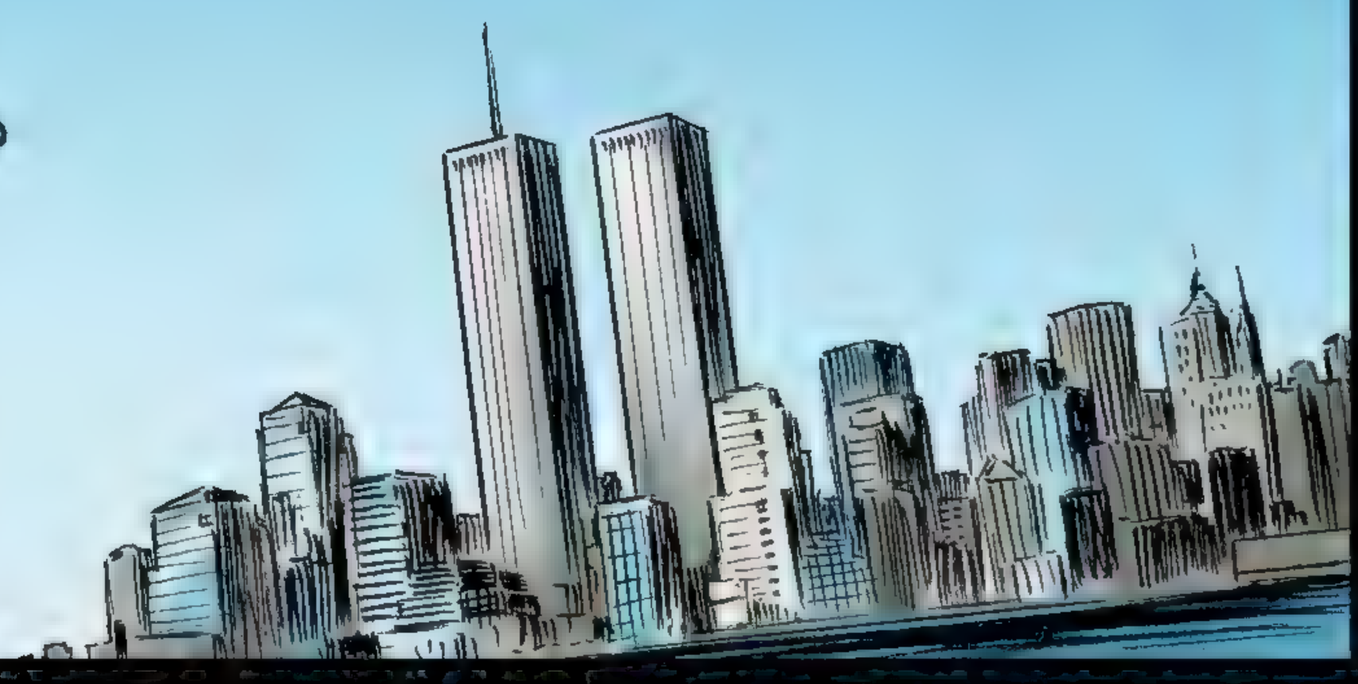
I ACTUALLY FEEL CHEATED. IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT.

YES, IT IS UNLIKE ME. WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF PRESIDENT THE VEEP.

A PRACTICAL POINT: I WAS JUST POINTING OUT TO A RED RIVER COLLEAGUE THAT THIS COULD BE A DANGEROUS TIME. I'D LIKE YOU TO BRING IN TEAM TITANIC AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

MERELY SECURITY. IF ANYONE DOES JUMP THE GUN, I'D LIKE A LITTLE MORE THAN A FAST RESPONSE UNIT BETWEEN ME AND OBLIVION.

STILL ON FOR BRUNCH TOMORROW?



YOUR TRIPLE STOLI, O DUCHESS OF ALL THAT--

GIVE.

SHOULD I FUCK OFF NOW, MY--

MM.

OH, MY LADY, JUST TO BE *TOLD* TO FUCK OFF BY--

MM.

...PHRASE USED WAS *ONE FOR ONE.* WHICH EFFECTIVELY EQUATES THE LIFE OF ONE OF THE SEVEN WITH THAT OF A *DOG.*

DUDE, AFTER THE SHIT HE SAID TO YOU, WHAT DO YOU THINK HE WAS WORTH?

THAT IS *NOT* THE POINT.

THERE ARE CLEARLY OTHER PRIORITIES. *HIGHER* PRIORITIES. OUR LEADER'S PLANS MUST SOON BEAR FRUIT; TODAY'S EVENTS WILL CREATE THE *PERFECT CLIMATE.*

IN TIMES LIKE *THESE*...WHAT ARE *ANY OF US* WORTH...?

ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD GET OUT?

I AM SAYING WE SHOULD *BEWARE.*

DUDE, WHY DON'T YOU JUST TAKE YOUR HELMET OFF--?

FORGET I ASKED...

I *CANNOT*-- MM--

THE *ANCIENT ATLANTEAN CURSE* THAT--

I AM SAYING THAT WE ARE NOW THE *SIX*...

SHUT UP.

THAT SOON, WHO KNOWS, WE MAY BECOME THE *FIVE*... THE *FOUR*...

SHUT UP, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

OH, I FORGOT YOU TWO WERE HERE.

FIND YOURSELVES SOMETHING TO DO, WILL YOU? I'M GOING TO NEED THE ROOM.

YOU BET.

OH, YOU MIGHT RUN INTO OUR GUESTS, BY THE WAY. POINT THEM IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IF YOU SEE THEM.

NO PROBLEM.

WHAT A PAIR OF TOOLS.

MY, MY.

HEADS UP, HOMELANDER...!

OH, THERE YOU ARE. GET A LITTLE LOST, DID WE?

LOST? YA THINK WE CAN'T FIND OUR WAY FROM--

IT'S JUST THAT YOU WERE COMING FROM COMPLETELY THE WRONG DIRECTION. WHICH MEANS YOU MUST HAVE TURNED LEFT INSTEAD OF RIGHT OUT OF THE ARRIVAL BAY, AND CIRCLED THE ENTIRE BASE.

YA KNOW YER TALKIN' ABOUT...

TROJAN!

ASTROGLIDE!

LADY ARKLITE!

STRAP-ON!

STOPCOCK!

THE TRUNCHEON!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING...?

PUT 'EM TOGETHER, AN' YOU GOT--

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. I INVITED YOU HERE, DIDN'T I?

STOP STANDING THERE LIKE FUCKING LUNATICS AND COME AND SIT DOWN, YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE ME A MIGRAINE...

next: INTERRUPTUS

#61 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

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Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #61

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I'M SORRY.

I THOUGHT I COULD BUT I CAN'T.

I'M SORRY.

OVER THE HILL WITH THE SWORDS OF A THOUSAND MEN

part two

ONE KISS. WE COULDN'T EVEN FINISH ONE KISS.

WHAT HAPPENED, DID YOU INSTANTLY FLASH ON ME AND--

DON'T...

STOP THAT SHIT.

YOU KNOW WHAT I DID. YOU SAW ME DO IT.

STOP THESE AWFUL HISTRIONICS EVERY TIME IT COMES UP; EITHER LIVE WITH IT OR GET RID OF ME FOR GOOD.

ALL RIGHT, I'M SORRY. I REALLY AM. BUT IT'S NO' AS SIMPLE AS THAT, I HAD--

I HAD A DREAM...

WHAT?

IT'S ONE I'VE HAD BEFORE. SORT OF A VARIATION ON A THEME.

IT'S BEEN GETTIN' WORSE.

YOU SEE, THERE'S THESE TWO...GAY ALIENS...

COME AGAIN?

HHHH.

WHEN THE THING HAPPENED W/ ROBIN I WAS TELLIN' HER ABOUT GAY ALIENS. SO NOW THEY COME INTO MY DREAMS TO REMIND ME WHAT A HYPOCRITE I AM, OR SOMETHIN'.

ANYWAY.

I SEE ROBIN. SHE'S WITH A-TRAIN. THEY LOOK REALLY, REALLY HAPPY, AN' THEN SHE TURNS INTO YOU.

YOU START DANCIN' WITH HIM. YOU SPIN ROUND AN' ROUND, FASTER AN' FASTER, AN' THEN--

"WELL.

"IN THIS LATEST VERSION:"

AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO SAY TO THAT?

EH--?

IT'S ALWAYS SOMETHING WITH YOU, HUGHIE. SOME NEW TWIST TO AGONIZE OVER, SOME REASON NOT TO MOVE ON AND BE HAPPY.

WE LIED TO EACH OTHER AND WE CAME CLEAN. AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED IT'S ALL DEBTS PAID, ALL SINS FORGIVEN. BUT YOU SEEM TO WANT TO WALLOW IN IT FOREVER.

I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE I'M JUST SICK OF THIS ***MEN ARE THE NEW WOMEN*** STUFF...

DO SOMETHING TO FIX IT.

PLEASE.

MOMMA, C'MON, KNOCK IT OFF--

MAH BOOYYYYY

MOMMA, I GOTTA ANSWER MY PHONE--!

MAH BOOYYYYY

DAMN.

YEAH?

DADDY?

JANINE?!

DADDY, I'M SO SORRY.

JANINE-- HONEY--OH JESUS--

DADDY, I'M OKAY. I'M GOING TO BE OKAY.

HONEY, TELL ME WHERE YOU AT--I GOTTA COME GET YOU, I GOTTA--

NO, DADDY, PLEASE DON'T DO THAT...

JANINE, WHAT THE FUCK THAT FUCKIN' CUNT DO TO YOU?!

I'M SORRY.

I'M SORRY.

I AIN'T GONNA DO THAT AGAIN.

DADDY... I GOT AWAY FROM HER.

YOU DID?

JANINE, TELL ME WHERE YOU AT, I *GOTTA* COME GET YOU...

NO.

PLEASE JUST LISTEN TO ME FOR A SECOND.

MOM GOT ME INTO...SHE HAS THESE FRIENDS IN THE VALLEY. THEY'RE REALLY GROSS. BUT SHE WANTED TO GET BACK AT YOU, AND I WANTED TO GET BACK AT YOU--BUT--

I WAS WRONG. I WAS SO WRONG. BUT I GOT AWAY FROM HER, AND, AND I GOT MY HEAD STRAIGHT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME ANYMORE.

HONEY, HOW CAN I NOT WORRY ABOUT YOU? I'M SCARED OUTTA MY MIND FOR YOU, *PLEASE* TELL ME--

I WILL. I WILL. JUST GIVE ME SOME TIME AND I'LL CALL YOU, AND YOU CAN COME SEE ME--BUT RIGHT NOW I JUST NEED TO BE ON MY OWN.

I'M SOMEWHERE MOM CAN'T FIND ME, DADDY. AND THAT'S HOW IT'S GOING TO BE FROM NOW ON. I **PROMISE YOU:**

I'M NEVER GOING NEAR MOM AGAIN.

THE ORIGINAL IDEA WAS THAT THEY'D BE SIDEKICKS. THE WHOLE TEAM WOULD BE MADE UP OF SIDEKICKS.

THERE WAS THE OBVIOUS APPEAL TO THE TEENAGE MARKET. ALSO--FRANKLY--TAKING THE WARD AWAY FROM THE SENIOR PARTNER IN SOME OF THESE DUOS, IT HELPED TO REDUCE THE TEMPTATION FACTOR.

BUT OVER THE YEARS THE SIDEKICKS GREW UP, AND YOU HAD TEENAGE KIX AND THE YOUNG AMERICANS COMING ALONG TO TAKE CARE OF THE YOUNGER DEMOGRAPHIC. AND GRADUALLY THEY STARTED MAKING UP THE NUMBERS WITH WHOEVER DIDN'T FIT IN ANYWHERE ELSE.

THAT DOESN'T INSPIRE A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE...

OH, MAKE NO MISTAKE, TEAM TITANIC INCLUDES SOME VERY POWERFUL INDIVIDUALS. THEIR PROBLEM HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF FOCUS.

BUT THAT CAN BE AN ADVANTAGE, TOO. WHENEVER WE DEEM IT NECESSARY TO DISBAND OR REORGANIZE, FEW TEARS ARE SHED FOR THE GROUP'S PARTICULAR INCARNATION AT THAT TIME.

YOU'RE SAYING THEY MAKE GOOD CANNON FODDER...

I'M SAYING THEY MAKE GOOD CANNON FODDER.

AFTER YOU.

MS. BRADLEY, THIS IS JIMMY THE ONE, THE STARLIKE, REGINA DENTATA, MUZZELTOV, COUNTRY MAMA, DRY-HUMP, EARL MULCH AND SNAFFLETWAT, AND GUMCHUM.

TEAM TITANIC: MS. JESSICA BRADLEY.

YA WANT GUM?

AH, HELLO--

KCUS YM KCOC!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO HAVE A WORD?

MUZZELTOV, KNOCK IT OFF, MAN...

TOGGAF!

CAN HE REALLY...?

NO, BUT HE CAN HYPNOTIZE PEOPLE. THEN IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH WAY ROUND HE SPEAKS.

IF I CAN HAVE EVERYONE'S ATTENTION FOR A MOMENT?

YESTERDAY'S TRAGIC EVENTS HAVE UNDERSTANDABLY GIVEN RISE TO A DEGREE OF TENSION WITHIN THE CORPORATE COMMUNITY. VOUGHT-AMERICAN ARE DETERMINED TO GET THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME WITH THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM OF DISRUPTION.

TO THAT END, YOU HAVE TWO ABSOLUTE PRIORITIES. THE FIRST IS TO PROTECT ME.

THE SECOND IS TO PROTECT MS. BRADLEY. SHE IS AS IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF THIS COMPANY AS ANY OTHER SENIOR OFFICER.

OUR SECURITY PERSONNEL WILL PERFORM THEIR NORMAL DUTIES. THESE ORDERS ARE SPECIFIC TO YOUR TEAM.

QUESTIONS?

UH, I GUESS WE WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE STAR TOWER...

YEAH, IT NEEDS SOME WORK.

IT NEEDS DEMOLISHING. IT'S A PIGSTY.

TSUJ TEG SU TUO FO GNIKCUF *DNALEVELC!*

AN' HOW 'BOUT THE DAMN ROYALTIES, THAT CONTRACT AIN'T BEEN REWRITTEN SINCE FORD WAS IN THE--

IS ANY OF THIS RELEVANT?

UH...

WELL THEN.

WHAT'S...?

THE *CONTRACT.*

DO YOU WANT *YOUR* COPY?

NO, MAN. IF THIS IS THE END, LET'S JUST SAY FUCK IT AND GO.

A VERY *SHORT-SIGHTED* ATTITUDE. *FINANCIAL SECURITY* IS NOT A MATTER TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY; I HAVE AN EXCELLENT *ACCOUNTANT* IF YOU--

WHATEVER...

IT IS BY NO MEANS *CERTAIN* THAT THIS IS THE END OF *ANYTHING.* THE CURRENT *CRISIS* MAY YET PASS.

YOU GIVE ME A CALL IF YOU HEAR ANYTHING, OKAY?

WITH THE HOMELANDER TALKING TO THOSE FUCKING MANIACS? YEAH, RIGHT.

I'M GONNA CHECK INTO THE MANDARIN, CHILL FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS.

HMH.

GOOD GIRL, YER MAJESTY.

ALL RIGHT, BOYS, YOU MISS ME? BLOODY HELL, LOOK WHO IT IS!

SHOULD WE NAIL DOWN ALL THE CHAIRS AN' THAT? HERE, YOU BUNG THE TELLY OUT THE WINDOW, FRENCHIE'S GONNA BE HEARTBROKEN...!

UH, YEAH.

I WAS JUST EXPLAININ' ABOUT THAT.

I HAD SOME SHIT HAPPEN... I...

I STILL AIN'T SURE HOW IT'S GONNA TURN OUT. BUT I THINK THE WORST IS OVER, AN' THERE AIN'T A WHOLE LOT I CAN DO ABOUT IT ANYHOW. I JUST GOTTA WAIT.

AN' I...

I WANNA APOLOGIZE.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MATE. LAST TIME ANYONE PISSED ME OFF I STABBED THE CUNT TO DEATH, SO WHAT'S A BIT O' BROKEN FURNITURE BETWEEN FRIENDS?

WHERE WERE YOU, ANYWAY?

EHHHRRRR FLYIN' VISIT TO SEE RAYNER. DIDN'T GET A WINK O' SLEEP.

OH SHIT, DAKOTA BOB. WE STILL EVEN OPERATIN'?

WELL, THAT'S THE BIG FUCKIN' QUESTION, INNIT? VIC CAN GUT THE C.I.A. AN' PULL OUR FUNDIN' LIKE THAT.

BUT NO ONE'S HEARD ANYTHIN' SO FAR. IT MIGHT BE VOUGHT DON'T WANNA CHANCE THEIR ARM, WHAT WITH ALL THE DIRT WE GOT ON EVERYONE. SO JUST FOR NOW IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL.

TELL THAT TO THE BLOODY HOMELANDER...

EXACTLY. SO WE CARRY ON DIGGIN', WE KEEP UP THE SURVEILLANCE.

IN YOUR CASE, THAT MEANS GOIN' THROUGH THE FILES ONE MORE TIME, JUST IN CASE WE MISSED--

AW, YOU GOTTA BE SHITTIN' ME! *AGAIN?*

WITH A FINE TOOTH COMB, AS THEY SAY.

YOU KNOW HOW MANY TIMES I--

YOU WANNA USE MY COMPUTER? THINK YOURS IS ON THE BLINK AT THE MINUTE.

FUCK...!

UM...ARE WE NO' GONNA...

I MEAN THE THING WI' HIM AN' HIS--

HIS BUSINESS IS HIS BUSINESS.

...AS WE MOVE INTO THE NEXT PHASE, THE COLORS AND TIGHTS APPROACH IS GOING TO BE INCREASINGLY SIDELINED. SO IT WON'T BE A MAJOR CONCERN IF WE BEGIN USING UP SOME OF THE SURPLUS MATERIAL.

WE'RE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE FINANCIAL HIT?

WELL, THAT'S THE INTERESTING THING: VICTORY REPORT THAT SALES OF PAYBACK AND G-MEN TITLES HAVE NOT BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY THE TEAMS' REAL-LIFE DISAPPEARANCES. MERCHANDISING ALSO REMAINS HEALTHY.

PEOPLE STILL THINK THESE CHARACTERS ARE COMING BACK. AND BY THE TIME THEY REALIZE THEY AREN'T, THE DEFENSE CONTRACTS--ALL BEING WELL--SHOULD BE STARTING TO KICK IN.

THE TRICK, OF COURSE, WILL BE FOR US TO SUCCESSFULLY REACH THE NEXT PHASE. HENCE TEAM TITANIC.

SO LONG AS WE'RE, AH, REALLOCATING PERSONNEL...WHAT ABOUT THE HOMELANDER AND HIS EXTRACURRICULAR PURSUITS?

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IF WE'RE GOING TO PUT ANYONE OUT TO GRASS...

WELL, YOU KNOW WE HAVE THE MEANS. WE ALWAYS HAVE.

IT REMAINS LARGELY A QUESTION OF TIMING, AND I CERTAINLY AGREE WE'RE A MAJOR STEP CLOSER TO THE DAY.

MM.

WHAT ARE THE MEANS?

YOU'VE NEVER TOLD ME.

NO, I HAVEN'T.

HE SPENT THE FIRST PART OF HIS LIFE CONFINED IN A ROOM WITH A NUCLEAR WEAPON. WE'VE TAKEN A LOT OF RISKS WITH THE HOMELANDER IN THE NAME OF PROFIT, BUT WE WEREN'T GOING TO UNLEASH POWER LIKE HIS WITHOUT MAINTAINING AN ULTIMATE SANCTION.

WOULD A NUKE WORK?

OF COURSE.

HEROGASM. YOU'RE GOING TO DROP IT ON HEROGASM.

THAT'S CERTAINLY BEEN DISCUSSED. BUT IF WE EVER REACH THAT STAGE OUR PROBLEMS WILL INVOLVE MUCH MORE THAN A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL.

BESIDES, NO MATTER WHAT THE LOCATION, YOU CAN'T DETONATE A DEVICE LIKE THAT AND EXPECT IT TO PASS UNNOTICED. WE'D QUITE SIMPLY NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT.

SO...?

SO, OUR PLAN FOR THE HOMELANDER IS SPECIFIC TO HIM ALONE. I'LL SHOW YOU THE DETAILS WHEN WE'RE BACK AT THE OFFICE, IF YOU LIKE.

AH...YES. YES, I WOULD.

THE CHECK, PLEASE.

I REALLY APPRECIATE YOU TAKING ME INTO YOUR CONFIDENCE LIKE THIS. I'M QUITE FLATTERED, AS A MATTER OF FACT.

NO REASON TO BE. I'VE BEEN QUITE FRANK ABOUT MY HOPES FOR YOUR CAREER AT VOUGHT.

YES...

NEVER MORE SO THAN WHEN YOU INSTRUCTED TEAM TITANIC TO LOOK AFTER ME. I WAS QUITE TAKEN ABACK BY THAT, YOU MADE ME FEEL VERY SAFE.

BUT I SHOULD TELL YOU, I FEEL SAFE AROUND YOU ANYWAY.

HMM.

I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD TELL YOU, MS. BRADLEY.

BUT I FEEL I CAN RELAX AROUND YOU.

OH.

OH SHIT.

BUTCHER?

YEAH?

GET READY TO BE ONE SMUG MUTHAFUCKA.

HERE, THIS SOUNDS ALL RIGHT.

YOU REMEMBER THE IDENT CODES I FOUND ON THE REQUEST FOR BLACK NOIR'S A.V.8? THE PRIORITY CLASSIFICATION, GOT CANCELLED THE SAME DAY?

UH...

I SAID ONE CODE WAS BRADLEY, THE OTHER WAS F.S. OH-OH-OH: MEANIN' ZERO-ZERO-ZERO. I TOLD YOU IT WAS A DEAD END.

IT AIN'T ZERO-ZERO-ZERO, IT'S OH-OH-OH. I JUST SAID WHAT I THOUGHT I SEEN.

WHO THE FUCK PUTS THREE LETTER OHS TOGETHER...?

I AIN'T FEELIN' ALL THAT SMUG YET, MATE.

YOU WILL. I DID THE SEARCH ON THE WRONG CODE.

YOU CALL THE LEGEND AN' GET ME INTO THE VOUGHT SYSTEM TODAY, AN' I JUST MIGHT GIVE YOU BLACK FUCKIN' NOIR ON A PLATE.

THAT'LL MEAN GOIN' TO SEE HIM...

BLACK NOIR AGAIN? I THOUGHT YOU SAID THAT WAS NOTHIN'?

AIN'T QUITE SURE.

HE THINKS BLACK NOIR'S A POSSIBLE WAY INTO THE SEVEN. I THINK IT'S WORTH PURSUIN', IF ONLY 'COS WE'VE GOT FUCK ALL ELSE.

THAT'S NO' NOTHIN'...!

WAIT A MINUTE, WHAT ABOUT THESE--THIS WHATEVER-IT-IS YOU WERE TALKIN' ABOUT BLACKMAILIN' THE HOMELANDER WITH? WHAT ELSE DO WE NEED BESIDES THAT?

VOUS ETES BEHIND THE TIMES, PETIT HUGHIE. WATCH THE TAPES, SEE THE HOMELANDER TALK TO HIS REFLECTION LIKE THE MADDEST BASTARD.

IT WILL BE TOO LATE, HE TELLS US. HE WILL BE LE ROI D'ENFER.

WELL IF HE'S GONNA DO SOMETHIN', WHY NOT FUCKIN' *USE IT*--?

YOU AIN'T BEEN LISTENIN'. WE'RE TALKIN' ABOUT A WORLD WHERE BLACKMAIL DON'T MEAN NOTHIN'.

WE PLAY OUR HAND NOW, WE MIGHT JUST SEND HIM OVER THE EDGE. THE TOSSER'S BEEN SHOOTIN' DOWN AIRLINERS AN' DROPPIN' PEOPLE OUTTA THE SKY; WHO KNOWS WHAT'S GOIN' THROUGH HIS FUCKIN' HEAD?

WE DON'T WANNA EMBARRASS HIM.

WE WANNA SHORT-CIRCUIT THE CUNT.

UH, CAN I'VE A QUICK WORD WI' YOU?

CAN IT WAIT?

NO' REALLY.

I'VE BEEN THINKIN' A LOT ABOUT THE WAY THINGS ARE. AN' I'VE DECIDED I WANNA STOP--

OH FUCKIN' HELL, NOT AGAIN...!

WHAT?

HOW MANY BLEEDIN' TALKS'VE WE HAD THAT START WITH YOU THINKIN' ABOUT THE WAY THINGS ARE? YOU CAN'T HANDLE THIS, YOU DON'T LIKE THAT, YOU NEED MORE FUCKIN' TIME OFF.

IS THERE ANY CHANCE AT ALL O' YOU FINALLY TWIGGIN' WHAT WE DO HERE AN' SORTIN' YERSELF OUT? AN' ONCE AN' FOR FUCKIN' ALL, ***MAKIN' YER MIND UP...?***

AYE, I KEEP HEARIN' THAT. WELL, YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO HEAR I'VE MADE A BLOODY DECISION: I'M HAVIN' NOTHIN' ELSE TO DO WI' VIOLENCE.

I'LL INVESTIGATE, I'LL PLANT BUGS, I'LL DO WHATEVER'S NEEDED. BUT I'M NO' FUCKIN' HURTIN' FOLK ***EVER AGAIN***--ALL RIGHT?

AIN'T WE BEEN HERE BEFORE A COUPLA TIMES?

AYE, WE HAVE. AN' YOU SAID IT WASN'T RIGHT FOR ME, YOU SAID YOU COULD SEE I WASN'T LIKE THE REST O' THE BAMS.

I SAID IF YOU HAD A PROBLEM YOU COULD COME AN' TALK TO ME ABOUT IT. I DIDN'T MEAN GIVE ME AN ULTIMATUM AN' TELL ME TO FUCK MYSELF.

AW, THAT'S NO' WHAT I'M DOIN'...!

I'M JUST TRYNNA--I'M SAYIN' THIS SHITE GETS TO ME. I CAN'T JUST FORGET IT THE WAY YOU CAN, THE THINGS I'VE SEEN AN' THE THINGS I'VE DONE ARE ***WITH ME.***

THEY'RE IN MY DREAMS. THEY'RE FUCKIN' UP MY LIFE. AN'--

QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST THAT ***SMELL...?***

*THAT'S THE RANK SMELL O' **JUSTICE** IN YER NOSTRILS, FROGGY--AN' ALL THE GARLIC IN **ROME** AIN'T GONNA WASH IT AWAY!*

THAT'S THE SMELL O' NOW YA GOTTA ANSWER TO PARALACTIC...!

next: ASSASSINATION RUN

#62 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

QUEEN MAEVE
EMPRESS OF THE OTHERWORLD

#1

TO HER
STY
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#1
OF THE NINETIES!

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DYNAMITE ENTERTAINMENT

BOOK
ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FOR FULL BLEED AND REGULAR COMIC BOOK PAGE
ISSUE PAGE ARTIST(S)

Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #62

◀ CUT RIGHT HAND PAGE AT THIS LINE

◀ CUT RIGHT HAND PAGE AT THIS LINE

FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN. ABUT PAGE EDGES. TAPE ON BACK. **DO NOT OVERLAP**
ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKEN LINE BOX (LIVE AREA
ALL BLEED ART

OVER THE HILL WITH THE SWORDS OF A THOUSAND MEN

part three

FOR FUCK'S SAKE, I WANNA WORD WITH ONE OF 'EM! I WANNA KNOW WHO--

BLOODY HELL...!

YOU DID NOT SPECIFY, M'SIEU CHARCUTER.

WELL I THOUGHT IT WAS A BIT BLEEDIN' OBVIOUS, DIDN'T I?

BESIDES, YOU ARE--HOW YOU SAY--*ONE TO TALK,* N'EST-CE PAS?

FUCK ME RIGID. DO I HAVE TO THINK OF EVERYTHING NOW?

WELL, THEY ARE PARALACTIC, LES "SIX MILLION DOLLAR HEROES." PEUT-ETRE WE CAN WIRE ONE TO A LAPTOP, AND DOWNLOAD HIS--

OH, ACT YER AGE, FRENCHIE! YOU MAY AS WELL GO HOME AN' GET YER FUCKIN' OUIJA BOARD!

WIRE ONE TO A LAPTOP, HE SAYS! JESUS!

UH...I THINK THIS FELLA OVER HERE'S STILL BREATHIN'.

MAYBE...

NICE ONE, HUGHIE.

GLAD TO SEE SOMEONE STILL KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE DOIN'.

DIRECTOR RAYNER. WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

THANK YOU, MA'AM. I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN HERE BEFORE ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS.

HAVE YOU?

MISTER PRESIDENT, PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONDOLENCES FOR THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT SCHAEFER. HE WAS A GOOD MAN AND A GREAT LEADER.

I WAS FORTUNATE TO ENJOY AN EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS OFFICE; I VERY MUCH HOPE THE SAME WILL BE TRUE OF YOURS.

AH *WANT* MAH--

MISTER PRESIDENT.

MADAM DIRECTOR, ALL DOMESTIC C.I.A. ACTIVITY IS TO CEASE FORTHWITH, WITH THE SINGLE EXCEPTION OF OUR COUNTER-TERRORISM PROGRAM.

YOU WILL ISSUE NO ORDERS AND INITIATE NO OPERATIONS WITHOUT INFORMING US FIRST. YOU WILL PROVIDE FULL REPORTS ON *ALL* CURRENT AGENCY OPERATIONS--WITHIN THE UNITED STATES OR OVERSEAS, ONGOING OR SUSPENDED AS A RESULT OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

AS FAR AS YOU ARE CONCERNED, NO ACTION OF ANY KIND IS TO BE TAKEN WITHOUT THE EXPLICIT APPROVAL OF THIS OFFICE. YOU ARE NOT TO ACT INDEPENDENTLY OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS TEAM: DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

I BELIEVE SO, MA'AM.

I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT OPERATIONAL NECESSITY CAN SOMETIMES DEMAND SWIFT ACTION; THERE'S NOT ALWAYS TIME TO--

WE'LL REVIEW YOUR REPORTS. IN EACH CASE WE'LL INFORM YOU OF OUR RULING AS AND WHEN APPROPRIATE.

WHAT I MEAN IS...IT'S NOT ALWAYS PRACTICAL TO SUBMIT...

WE'LL WORK TOGETHER WITH YOUR OFFICE TO ACHIEVE THE BEST SOLUTION.

I SEE.

THANK YOU.

IF THERE'S NOTHING ELSE, MA'AM, MISTER PRESIDENT--I'LL FIND MY OWN WAY OUT.

NO.

I KNOW THE--

OH.

OH, MADAM DIRECTOR, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT WE'LL BE CONSIDERING OUR OWN APPOINTMENTS IN DUE COURSE. THE PRESIDENT HAS STILL TO FINALIZE THE SELECTION OF HIS CABINET; AFTER THAT HE'LL BE MOVING ON TO OTHER POSITIONS.

MIGHT BE TIME YOU MADE THAT CALL TO THE D.N.C..

AKKK

KZZT

NEEEEEB

COME ON, WANKER...

STOP PISSIN' ABOUT. WE KNOW YOU'RE JUST A BLOKE, YOU AIN'T HAVIN' A BLOODY COMPUTER MALFUNCTION.

GAKA

DORP

ALL RIGHT, PLAY IT YOUR WAY. FRENCHIE?

OHHHH DEAR, BRACHIAL ARTERY. LOOK AT ALL THAT CYBER-CLARET.

DUDE...!

FRENCHIE.

RIGHT THEN. TO WHAT DO WE OWE THE FUCKIN' PLEASURE?

WHA...?

WHO SENT YOU, YOU DOZY BASTARD...

VOUGHT-AMERICAN.

GUY FROM VOUGHT.

SAID YOU GOTTA GO.

OH JESUS, IS THIS IT--?

THESE ASSHOLES'RE ALL WE RATE? I MEAN I GET *PAYBACK*, BUT...

YEAH.

UNLESS THEY'RE SAVIN' THE BIG BOYS FOR SOMETHIN' ELSE.

SO THIS VOUGHT GUY, WHERE'D HE--

SHIT!

MY SELF-DESTRUCT! *YOU'VE TRIGGERED MY SELF-DESTRUCT!*

YOU GOTTA HELP ME! YOU GOTTA DISARM IT!

YOU'RE ON YER OWN WITH THAT ONE, SON!

SACRE BLEU...!

AW, JESUS, I THINK IT'S GONE RIGHT THROUGH!

CALL THE P.D. AN' GET 'EM TO GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS. HUGHIE, YOU NIP DOWNSTAIRS AN' TELL 'EM SOMETHIN' TO CALM 'EM DOWN.

SHOULD I SAY IT WAS LIKE A TERRORIST ATTACK...?

OH.

NO.

YEAH, I KNOW. I KNOW I WAS. WHAT CAN I SAY, IT'S A BAD HABIT O' MINE.

NOW, YOU CAN EITHER HANG UP AN' CARRY ON TAKIN' THE HUMP, OR YOU CAN GET ONTO THAT PONCE AT VICTORY AN' FIND OUT TODAY'S PASSWORD. AN' MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, WE CAN NIP THINGS IN THE BUD BEFORE THEY GET ANY WORSE.

YOU WHAT?

WELL BOB'S DEAD, VIC'S IN, THE HOMELANDER'S TALKIN' WORLD WAR THREE AN' VOUGHT JUST TRIED TO DO THE LOT OF US. IF THIS AIN'T IT, I DUNNO WHAT WOULD BE.

ALL RIGHT. CHEERS.

HE SAYS ABOUT TEN MINUTES.

RIGHT.

FRENCHIE, I WANT THE TWO O' YOU TO--

IF THIS REALLY IS WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE, THERE'S A COUPLE O' THINGS I SHOULD TELL YOU ABOUT.

NOT NOW, HUGHIE...

THE FIRST IS WHAT BLACK NOIR DID TO ME AT HEROGASM.

I DUNNO IF HE IS THE WEAK LINK IN THE SEVEN, OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE HOPIN' FOR. BUT THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHIN' WRONG WI' HIM.

IT WAS WHEN WE WERE GRABBIN' LUCERO. I DIDN'T HIT MY HEAD, I MADE THAT UP. *HE* GOT ME...

AN' HE...

HE...

HE STUCK HIS THUMB UP MY ARSE.

HE *WHAT--?*

HE SAID *GOOD SOLDIER, GOOD SOLDIER.* AN' THEN HE SHOWED IT TO ME AN'--HE STUCK IT UP THERE.

HE TOLD NO ONE? NO, HE COULD NOT HAVE, WE WERE NOT DISCOVERED...

MENTAL FUCKIN' BASTARD.

WHAT'S THE OTHER THING?

EH?

YOU SAID THERE WAS TWO THINGS.

OH. I--AH...

I, I TOOK MAEVE'S FILE FROM DOCTOR PECULIAR'S PLACE. IT'S GOT ALL THIS STUFF, UH, THERE'S A BIT WHERE THE HOMELANDER TRICKED HER INTO FUCKIN' BLACK NOIR. I THINK IT MIGHT BE WHY SHE PUT THE BUGS IN FOR US IN THE FIRST PLACE.

UH... THAT'S IT.

HMH.

WHAT'D YOU NICK THE FILE FOR?

EH--?

THE FILE?

OH--I-- I WAS GONNA INVESTIGATE--

YOU WEREN'T HOPIN' FOR A SET O' THEM PHOTOS O' HER, LIKE THE ONES I'VE GOT IN ME DESK?

YEAH, OKAY.

DO US A FAVOR AN' NIP HOME AN' GET IT.

HA!!

YOU KNOW... I DON'T WANNA RISK THE WRATH O' HUGHIE DESCENDIN' ON ME AGAIN...

BUT YOU DO REALISE THAT IF THIS *IS* WHAT SAVES THE DAY, IT'LL BE 'COS YOU WAS AFTER THEM PICTURES FOR A WANK?

...SOME VOUGHT ATTACK-BITCH, I'VE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE. SHE NEVER EVEN MENTIONED YOU.

NO?

NOT SPECIFICALLY. IT WAS A BLANKET ORDER, ALL OPERATIONS, RIGHT ACROSS THE BOARD.

THIS COULD JUST MEAN THEY'RE AS NERVOUS AS WE ARE. THEY DON'T WANT TO IMMEDIATELY PISS YOU OFF, NOT WITH WHAT YOU'VE GOT ON THEIR SUPES.

I MEAN GOD KNOWS, I WAS A GOOD LITTLE GIRL: I WASN'T LOOKING TO GIVE ANYONE AN EXCUSE FOR ANYTHING...

YEAH, I THOUGHT ABOUT THAT.

LEAVE US HANGIN', WONDERIN' WHEN THE AXE'LL FALL. BUT IT DON'T MAKE SENSE IF THEY'VE ALREADY SENT PARALACTIC AFTER US...

AREN'T THEY KIND OF A JOKE?

THEY WERE.

SO EITHER VOUGHT THINK WE'RE ONE TOO, OR THEY'RE HOLDIN' BACK THE SEVEN AN' SO ON FOR SOMETHIN' FUCKIN' HORRIBLE. YOU WANNA CHEER ME UP AN' TELL ME YOU GAVE THAT FILE TO THE AIR FORCE?

I GAVE THE GODDAMN THING TO NORAD.

GOOD GIRL.

YOU UNDERSTAND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE C.I.A. AND THE JOINT CHIEFS CONSPIRING AGAINST THEIR OWN PRESIDENT. WHICH IS NOTHING LESS THAN HIGH TREASON.

I FEEL LIKE THE GROUND DISAPPEARED FROM UNDER MY FEET YESTERDAY, AND NOW IT'S NEVER COMING BACK AGAIN...

WELL, YOU'LL LIKE THIS, THEN: IF THERE'S NO V.P. AN' SOMETHIN' HAPPENS TO THE PRESIDENT, WHO'S NEXT IN LINE?

UH... THE...SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, I THINK. CONGRESSWOMAN PELOSI.

WHY?

YOU BETTER GIVE HER A SHOUT.

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

YOU SAID IT YERSELF, WE'RE LIVIN' IN FUCKIN' INTERESTIN' TIMES. IF THE WHOLE THING GOES TITS-UP YOU'RE GONNA WANNA BE READY.

JESUS...!

WHAT ABOUT YOU, ARE YOU GOING TO HIT BACK AT VOUGHT?

ALREADY HAVE, DECIDED TO PLAY IT SAFE AN' DECAPITATE.

YOU PERSONALLY...?

NAH, I SENT THE EXPERTS.

GOT SOMETHIN' ELSE ON ME PLATE.

ART.

WHO CAN TRULY DEFINE IT?

ALLEZ VITE!

WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?

UH...THAT WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF WINE COOLERS?

NO, BEFORE THAT. MS. BRADLEY ASKED IF YOU HAD ANY EXPERIENCE IN CLOSE PROTECTION WORK, AND YOU SAID WE COULDN'T BE IN BETTER HANDS.

YOU SAID YOU'D BE RIGHT HERE TO LOOK AFTER US, EVEN WHEN THE HOMELANDER STARTS THE BALL ROLLING. WHAT EXACTLY DOES THAT MEAN?

WELL--I MEAN--WHEN THE PLAN STARTS, WHEN IT GOES INTO EFFECT. I MEAN THAT'S WHY YOU BROUGHT US HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE, RIGHT?

SMART PLAY, SUGAR. YOU UP TO SOME SERIOUS SHIT.

PRETEND--JUST FOR A SECOND--

THAT I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

C'EST BINGO.

REMEMBER THE WORDS OF M'SIEU CHARCUTER:

"AS ME OLD SERGEANT-MAJOR USED TO SAY--GET IN, BANJO THE BASTARDS, AND FUCK OFF OUT OF IT."

HAAAAAIIIIIEEEEEEE!!!

...MERDE.

NO, THE PAGES AREN'T *FUCKIN' STUCK TOGETHER...!*

JUST ASKIN'.

HA BLOODY HA.

OH, THERE YOU ARE, HUGHIE. C'MON UP TO THE ROOF, I'VE GOT SOMETHIN' I WANNA SHOW YOU.

YOU ALL RIGHT?

NO.

I BASICALLY JUST TOLD EVERYONE I GOT *VIOLATED*. IT WASN'T EASY FOR ME TO SAY, IT'S BEEN HANGIN' OVER ME FOR MONTHS.

BUT NOBODY GIVES A SHIT, IT'S JUST FUCK HUGHIE AN' ON TO THE NEXT ORDER O' BUSINESS.

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.

I MEAN I'D LOVE TO TELL YOU IF THINGS WEREN'T SO FUCKED WE'D ALL GIVE YOU A BIG HUG, AN' HAVE A NICE ENCOUNTER GROUP SO YOU COULD SHARE YER PAIN. BUT I DUNNO IF YOU'VE NOTICED, HUGHIE, THAT AIN'T EXACTLY THE WAY THE BOYS GET ON...

AYE.

NEVER MIND. MAYBE THIS'LL CHEER YOU UP.
WHAT WILL?
YOU'LL SEE.
A
ARE THINGS REALLY AS BAD AS YOU WERE SAYIN', AYE?
STAIRWAY A ROOF ACCESS
THEY'RE ON A FUCKIN' KNIFE-EDGE, MATE. THAT'S WHY YOU'VE GOTTA SORT YERSELF OUT, PRONTO.
YOU TOLD ME YOU AIN'T HAVIN' NOTHIN' TO DO WITH THE ROUGH STUFF NO MORE. AN' FROM WHAT I SAW O' YER MEDAL-WINNIN' PERFORMANCE UNDER THE DESK THERE, YOU MEANT IT.
WELL, I AIN'T GONNA ARGUE WITH YOU. I TRIED THAT.
I AIN'T GONNA SAY NOTHIN', REALLY.
WHAT THE FUCK--?
EXCEPT THAT IF *THIS* DON'T WORK--

THEN I BLEEDIN' WELL GIVE UP.

YOU HEARD ME. JUST SPREAD THE WORD, THEY ALL KNOW WHAT TO DO.

I'LL SEE YOU IN D.C..

HMH.

TOMORROW...

THE SUN RISES ON A *DIFFERENT* WORLD.

WUUUUUHHHK

WUUHHHLLLGGGKK

OH JESUS

WHAT HAVE I DONE

OH SHIT

next: A LADY OF A CERTAIN AGE

#63 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

DYNAMITE ENTERTAINMENT

BOOK ISSUE PAGE ARTIST(S)
ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FOR FULL BLEED AND REGULAR COMIC

Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #63

DA
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◀ CUT RIGHT HAND PAGE AT THIS LINE

FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN. ABUT PAGE EDGES. TAPE ON BACK. **DO NOT OVERLAP**
ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKEN LINE BOX (LIVE AREA

OVER THE HILL WITH THE SWORDS OF A THOUSAND MEN

part four

WHAT'S...

IS THIS FOR...

ARE WE GONNA LIKE INTERROGATE HIM, OR SOMETHIN'--?

ALREADY DONE THAT.

BLOODY USELESS. APPARENTLY THE HOMELANDER'S OUT TO SEIZE POWER FOR VOUGHT, BUT HE DON'T KNOW WHEN AN' HE DON'T KNOW HOW.

HIM AN' THE DEEP GOT FROZEN OUT AFTER THE THING WITH JACK.

BUT HOW THE FUCK DID YOU *GET HIM...?*

WHAT DO YOU CARE? C'MON, HUGHIE, YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT.

HERE, I TOLD YOU I'D LET YOU LISTEN TO THIS.

FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT. BUT HERE YOU GO.

HEY, HERE HE IS. SO HOW WAS SCOTLAND?

HELLO?

DUDE, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST, WHAT'S UP?

I, UH...I THINK I FUCKED UP.

I KIND OF KILLED SOME CHICK.

I MEAN I DIDN'T MEAN TO, I JUST FUCKING RAN INTO THE GUY AND SENT HIM FLYING. I'VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE, IT WAS SO MUCH EASIER THAN I EXPECTED.

SO?

SO HE SLAMMED INTO THIS GIRL I'M TALKING ABOUT AND CRUSHED HER AGAINST A WALL.

AND WHAT DID YOU DO THEN?

OH, HOMELANDER, A-TRAIN'S GOT A KIND OF A... WELL...

I HEARD. WHAT DID YOU DO?

I--WELL. I GOT THE FUCK OUT OF THERE MY KIND OF FAST.

THEN YOU WIN A COOKIE. THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE.

UH...YEAH. YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED.

REALLY IT'S VOUGHT'S FAULT, EXPECTING US TO CLEAN UP THEIR MESS. SOME C-LISTER GOES OFF THE RAILS AND THEY THINK THERE WON'T BE ANY COLLATERAL?

HE'S RIGHT, DUDE. IT HAPPENS A LOT MORE THAN YOU'D THINK, I MEAN YOU USE POWERS LIKE OURS IN THE REAL WORLD--WELL, YOU'VE GOTTA EXPECT A FEW CIVILIANS DOING THE WHIRLY-SPLAT.

HEH. REALLY?

SHIT, YEAH. I MEAN YOU WON'T FIND THIS IN THE ARCHIVE EDITIONS, BUT MY MAN BLACK NOIR OVER THERE ONCE TOOK OUT A SCHOOL BUS.

COMPARED TO HIM YOU'RE A FUCKING VIRGIN, DUDE...

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH...!

VINCENT CASSELL! VINCENT CASSELL!

WHAT THE FUCK--

WHO--?

TAE TIHS DNA EID!

OH MY GOD, BUTCHER'S GOING FOR IT--!

I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THAT. BUT WE HAVE TO LEAVE.

FUCKIN' PRICK, YOU--

FOR FUCK'S SAKE *AIM*, YOU--!

HUNNHH!!

SALLE BOCHE!

YA WANT GUM?

THERE! THERE! FIRE!

TURN IT OFF.

LISTEN, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT SHIT. CHECK THIS OUT, WE'VE GOT THE CANDIDATES--

TURN IT THE FUCK *OFF.*

YOU FUCKIN' PRICK, YOU CUNT, DO YOU'VE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU DID TO ME--?

HNNHH!

DO YOU? DO YOU, YOU BASTARD? *DO YOU?!*

GUHHK--!

YOU KILLED HER, YOU STUPID SHITE! YOU DIDN'T GIVE A FUCK, BUT SHE WAS EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD TO ME!

SHE LOVED ME, AN' I LOVED HER, AN' EVERYTHING WAS GOIN' RIGHT AN' IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU NONE O' THIS WOULD'VE EVEN *HAPPENED...!*

HER NAME WAS *ROBIN--*

DUDE, I DON'T WANNA FUCKING DIE...!

I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY FOR WHATEVER I DID, I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU FUCKING WANT!

SHUT UP!

JUST DON'T KILL ME! DON'T FUCKING KILL ME, OKAY? *PLEASE!*

SHUT UP, YOU PRICK, I'M TRYNNA TELL YOU ABOUT HER!

SHE WAS A REAL PERSON. A HUMAN BEING.

PLEASE, I'M SORREEEEEEE--!

SHUT UP, I SAID! SHE--

NO-NO-NO, DON'T KILL ME! NO-NO-NO-NOOOOO...!

YOU STUPID CUNT, SHUT UP! SHUT--

NNAAAAAAAAHHHHH

HUGHIE, IN MY EXPERIENCE, THERE'S NO POINT MAKIN' SPEECHES, MATE.

I MEAN YOU CAN TRY AN' TURN IT INTO A BIG SCENE, BUT...HE AIN'T LISTENIN'. LOOK AT HIM.

BEST THING TO DO IS JUST GET IT THE FUCK OVER WITH.

I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU.

MM-HM.

YOU'RE QUITTING?

LOOKS LIKE IT.

YOU THINK YOU CAN WALK AWAY FROM ALL THIS?

YOU'RE FUCKING A-RIGHT I DO.

WELL, GOOD FOR YOU.

HEY.

YOU STOOD UP FOR ME ONCE. WITH BLACK NOIR AND THOSE OTHER PRICKS.

NOW YOU'LL PROBABLY JUST SAY *DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEAD,* BUT I'M GOING TO MAKE AN ASS OF MYSELF AND SAY THERE MIGHT BE SOMEONE IN THERE. SOMEWHERE DOWN UNDER ALL THOSE LAYERS.

SO I'M ALSO GOING TO SAY THIS MIGHT BE THE TIME FOR YOU TO GO TOO. AND NOT JUST BECAUSE THE T.V. SAYS *PLEASE STAND BY* ON EVERY SINGLE CHANNEL, EITHER.

I NOTICED THAT.

IF YOU STILL THINK THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE TO RUN BACK TO--WELL, YOU CAN PROBABLY SIT OUT WHATEVER'S GOING ON, NO PROBLEM. YOU'VE GOT YOUR VIEW, YOU'VE GOT YOUR MEANINGLESS SHIT.

OTHERWISE...

IT'S EASY FOR YOU.

YOU HAVE SOMEONE.

HMH.

ACTUALLY, I'M NOT A HUNDRED PERCENT CERTAIN THAT I DO. HE'S BEEN BEHAVING LIKE KIND OF A LITTLE BITCH.

THEY WILL DO IT.

YEAH.

SO I SUPPOSE I'M JUST GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE THE CHANCE.

NAH--

MERDE--

DANS LE NOM DE DIEU, SE DEFENDRE--!

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, GET HER!

DRY-HUMP, KILL THE FUCKING BITCH! COME ON!

HEY--

YA WANT GUM?

STAND DOWN.

NOW.

WELL, M'SIEU.

YOU WOULD SAY THAT.

TEAM TITANIC IS TO CEASE ALL OFFENSIVE ACTION. MEDICAL PERSONNEL ARE ON THEIR WAY; THEY WILL TREAT YOUR WOUND IMMEDIATELY.

I NEED TO SPEAK TO WILLIAM BUTCHER WITHOUT DELAY.

NO DOUBT YOU DO, VOUS SINGE DE REDDITION...

LET ME BE CLEAR, I AM NOT SURRENDERING. BUT I BELIEVE BOTH YOUR PEOPLE AND MINE ARE THE VICTIMS OF A HOAX.

YOUR ATTACK: PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE OR RETALIATION?

QU'EST-CE... QUE C'EST...?

I AM ASKING YOU WHO YOU BELIEVE STRUCK FIRST.

YOU SENT-- YOU--

NO.

I ORDERED NO ACTION AGAINST YOU WHATSOEVER. IF YOU WERE ATTACKED IT WAS NOT AT MY BEHEST.

MY SUSPICION IS THAT ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL HAS SET VOUGHT-AMERICAN AND THE BOYS AGAINST EACH OTHER, TO KEEP US BUSY WHILE HIS OWN PLANS REACH FRUITION. I BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST TO FIND OUT WHAT THOSE PLANS MIGHT BE.

I AM OFFERING A TRUCE, NEGOTIATION AND MEDICAL ATTENTION.

IF YOU BELIEVE ME TO BE INSINCERE, THERE IS NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO PREVENT YOU FROM HAVING YOUR COMPANION KILL ME.

TO TAKE OVER FROM THE LAMPLIGHTER. WE'RE THINKING--WELL, WE'RE THINKING PUSSY.

HEY, TURN IT OFF...

HUH?

TURN IT OFF, I DON'T WANNA HEAR ANYMORE.

YEAH, TO MAKE US UP TO SEVEN AGAIN. I MEAN MAEVE'S NO FUCKING FUN...HEY, YOU WANNA SEE THE PHOTOS?

I SAID FUCKIN' STOP IT, ALL RIGHT? I'M NO' GONNA DO THIS, I'M NO' GONNA HAVE YOU PLAY ME SOME *TAPE* AN' THEN I DO SOMETHIN' DREADFUL...!

DUDE, WE'VE GOT OUR FUCKING PICK OF THE CROP: WE CAN HAVE SHEHEMOTH, THE CRIMSON COUNTESS...

JESUS CHRIST, DO YOU THINK I'M STUPID? *STOP!*

OR ONE OF THE SLUTS FROM THE MAVERIKZ...OR I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE INTO JAILBAIT, BUT CHECK THESE OUT...

I MEAN OLD ENOUGH TO BLEED, OLD ENOUGH TO--

JESUS, WHO THE FUCK IS THAT?

MM? OH, PEACHES AND CREAM. THAT'S STARLIGHT, FROM THE YOUNG AMERICANS.

YOU WONDERING WHAT SHE'D DO TO REACH THE HIGH FRONTIER?

FOR THE LAST FUCKIN' TIME.

THEY THINK WE'RE SHIT.

YOU CUNT.

YOU *CUNT.*

HOW DO YOU LIKE IT, DOWN ON YOUR *FUCKIN' KNEES...?*

WHAT?

GOING SOMEWHERE?

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

I HAVE A PLAN IN PLACE.

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT IT ALREADY.

BUT THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT...

NO, THIS IS PERSONAL.

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO TO YOU.

WATCH OUT, MY LADY, HE'S TURNED *BAD!*

BUT I'LL PROTECT YOU! I WON'T LET HIM LAY A HAND ON YOU!

GAKKK

YES, MOST WONDERFUL WOMAN OF ALL! MAKE ME YOUR *LIVING WEAPON!*

HMH.

IT'S A METAL PROP, YOU STUPID WHORE.

YOU SEEN THIS SHIT?

AH, NO WORD FROM THE WHITE HOUSE AT THIS TIME, WE--

C.N.N.

N.B.C.

--OF GUNFIRE COMING FROM THE PENTAGON--

--CAPED FIGURES ON THE GROUND AND IN FLIGHT AT BOTH LOCATIONS. ONE EARLY SUGGESTION, THAT SUPERHEROES HAVE MOBILIZED TO DEFEND GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, IS NOW--

FOX.

--CONFLICTING REPORTS, BUT OH FATHER HAS BEEN IN CONTACT AND HAS PROMISED A STATEMENT--

LOOKIN' LIKE SOMEBODY DROPPED THE BIG ONE...

YEAH, ALL A BIT WHERE-WERE-YOU-THE-NIGHT-IT-STARTED, INNIT?

HERE'S OUR FIRST SURGICAL STRIKE.

ALL DONE, FRENCHIE?

AH... NON, M'SIEU CHARCUTER.

THERE HAS BEEN A DEVELOPMENT.

FRENCHIE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

AH, OUI, OUI. PERHAPS A KILO LIGHTER, BUT WE ARE...WE ARE FREE TO GO WHENEVER WE LIKE.

YOU WHAT...?

THERE IS SOMEONE TO WHOM YOU SHOULD SPEAK, M'SIEU:

THIS IS JAMES STILLWELL OF THE VOUGHT-AMERICAN CORPORATION.

WELL, THIS IS MRS. BUTCHER'S LITTLE BOY. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

YOUR PEOPLE ARE RECEIVING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR INJURIES INCURRED DURING THEIR ASSAULT ON EMPLOYEES OF THIS COMPANY. AFTER THAT THEY WILL INDEED BE FREE TO LEAVE.

THE HOMELANDER SENT PARALACTIC TO ATTACK YOU IN OUR NAME. HIS INTENTION WAS THAT YOU WOULD RETALIATE, KEEPING BOTH SIDES OCCUPIED WHILE HE PURSUED HIS OWN OBJECTIVES.

PROOF?

PARALACTIC ARE A JOKE: A COPY OF A COPY OF A G-COPY. I'D SEND SUPERDUPER AFTER YOU BEFORE I THOUGHT OF THEM.

SO WHAT'S THE HOMELANDER REALLY UP TO?

THAT'S NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR. HE'S MANAGED TO CONVINCE A MAJORITY OF THE SUPERHUMAN COMMUNITY TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ***FOR VOUGHT,*** APPARENTLY AS A STANDING FORCE IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT NEUMAN.

WE OF COURSE HAVE NO SUCH PLANS. WE HAVE NO NEED TO TAKE VIOLENT ACTION, WE--

ALREADY HAVE YER FINGERS UP VIC'S ARSE, YEAH. THE WANKER'S BEEN PLANNIN' THIS FOR A WHILE, HE MUST'VE KNOWN DAKOTA BOB WAS GONNA BE CHECKIN' OUT EARLY...

I MENTIONED IT TO HIM AT HEROGASM. CLEARLY A TACTICAL ERROR.

I'M TELLING YOU THIS IN THE SPIRIT OF FULL DISCLOSURE, SO--

I THOUGHT YOU LOT COULD CLEAN UP YER OWN SHIT?

WE CAN. BUT TO DO SO WE NEED YOU AND YOUR TEAM TO TAKE A BACK SEAT.

IN THAT CASE I'VE GOT SOME BAD FUCKIN' NEWS FOR YOU.

I DON'T HEAR FROM FRENCHIE AN' HER INSIDE AN HOUR, YOU'RE DEAD. YOU PERSONALLY. AN' YOU AIN'T GONNA LIKE THE JOB I DO ON YOU, NEITHER.

SEE YOU.

PUT OUT EVERYTHIN' WE'VE GOT. EVERY CHANNEL AN' EVERY SITE.

NINE-ELEVEN, GODOLKIN AN' THE G-KIDDIES, KATRINA, ALL OF IT. EMPTY THE FUCKIN' VAULTS AN' GET IT OUT THERE.

THE HOMELANDER PICTURES...?

'SPECIALLY THEM.

WH...WH... WHAT'RE YOU *DOIN'*...?

GOIN' TO WASHINGTON.

YOU HAD YOUR TURN, HUGHIE.

NOW I'M HAVIN' MINE.

next: ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

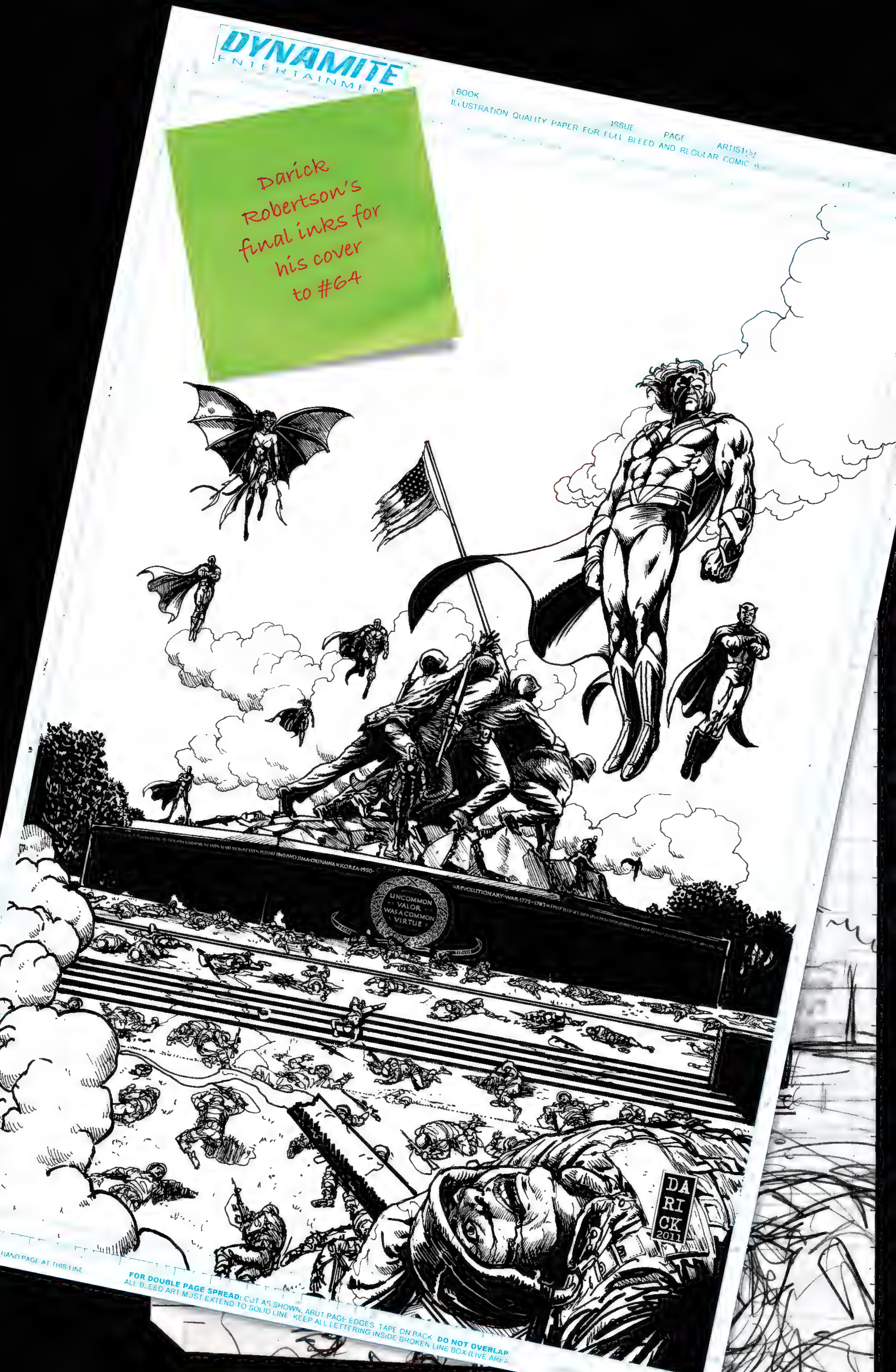
#64 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

DYNAMITE
ENTERTAINMENT

BOOK
ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FOR FULL BLEED AND REGULAR COMIC B

ISSUE PAGE ARTIST(S)

Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #64



HAND PAGE AT THIS LINE

FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN, ABUT PAGE EDGES, TAPE ON BACK. **DO NOT OVERLAP**
ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKEN LINE BOX (LIVE AREA

OVER THE HILL WITH THE SWORDS OF A THOUSAND MEN

part five

...I DON'T BLAME HIM, TRYNNA FLY THROUGH THAT AIRSPACE TONIGHT'D BE SUICIDE. JUST MAKE SURE WE'VE GOT TRANSPORT WAITIN' AT DULLES.

AN' MAKE SURE THE BLOKE IN CHARGE KNOWS THE SCORE, WILL YOU? HOW'S THE REST OF IT COMIN'?

FUCK, I DIDN'T KNOW THEY HAD THAT MANY. MAGIC.

YEAH, ALL RIGHT, THEN.

SEE YOU.

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WE HAD HALF O' THIS...!

YEAH, SOME OF IT'S A BIT OF A GIGGLE, INNIT?

JUST TALKIN' TO RAYNER, THERE. ALL SORTED. MEANIN' WE'RE WALKIN' INTO FUCK KNOWS WHAT, AN' SHE'S NICE AN' SAFE IN HER BUNKER...

AYE, FROM WHAT I'VE BEEN SEEIN' ON THE NEWS, WASHINGTON'S FUCKIN' *CRAWLIN'* WI' SUPES...!

COUNTIN' ON GETTIN' A BIT OF A HAND WITH THEM. IT'S THE SEVEN IN PARTICULAR WE'VE GOTTA WORRY ABOUT, WHICH IS WHY I'VE GOT M.M. FOLLOWIN' THIS BIG HUNCH OF HIS.

NOSE LIKE A FUCKIN' BLOODHOUND, THAT BLOKE.

HUGHIE?

ALL I'VE BEEN DOIN'S TRYNNA TOUGHEN YOU UP, MATE. I JUST CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT O' YOU GETTIN' HURT.

'COS THIS FUCKIN' WORLD'LL EAT YOU ALIVE IF YOU LET IT.

HOW LONG NOW, MATE?

E.T.A. IS *FOURTEEN MINUTES,* SIR.

--SOURCE OR SOURCES REMAIN UNCLEAR, BUT A TIDAL WAVE OF IMAGES AND DOCUMENTATION--

--SUPERHERO COMMUNITY, SEEMINGLY OVER SEVERAL DECADES--

--ALLEGATIONS INCLUDING--

--HEELS OF THE RECENT SCANDAL INVOLVING JACK FROM JUPITER--

--FRESH LIGHT ON EVENTS IN WASHINGTON D.C. TODAY--

--AMONGST OTHERS, LINKS TO RUSSIAN ORGANIZED CRIME, WHOSE--

M. MARATHON
9/11/01

--TRAGEDY OF SEPTEMBER THE ELEVENTH, WHEN INTERNATIONALLY FAMOUS TEAM THE SEVEN ARE ALLEGED TO HAVE BOARDED--

--DESTROYED THE LEVEES TO CAUSE WIDESPREAD FLOODING AND WHAT'S BEEN TERMED ETHNIC CLEANSING, FREEING UP VALUABLE REAL ESTATE FOR--

--OF A CONSPIRACY INVOLVING THE VOUGHT-AMERICAN CORPORATION AND PRESIDENT VICTOR NEUMAN, WITH A PROGRAM TO PUSH SUPERHUMAN DEVELOPMENT ON THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT: ULTIMATELY REPLACING MEN AND MACHINES WITH--

NORAD, I JUST BLEW A PLANE-LOAD OF AMERICANS OUT OF THE SKY, IF WE LET THIS ONE THROUGH IT WAS FOR NOTHING! PLEASE!

--MOST DISTURBING OF ALL, A SERIES OF PHOTGRAPHS SHOWING THE HOMELA

ENOUGH.

?

OH.

THESE DON'T OPEN THE WHOLE WAY. YOU'LL HAVE TO SMASH YOUR WAY IN OR USE LASER-VISION OR SOMETHING.

TRY TO DO IT QUIETLY, I'M HAVING THE WORST HEADACHE OF MY ENTIRE LIFE.

CHIEF, ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THE AUTHORIZATION FOR THESE THINGS...?

ONE HUNDRED PERCENT.

OKAY, BECAUSE I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THEM BEFORE. FOR STARTERS THEY'RE D.U.-TIPPED-- SINCE WHEN DO A.A. MISSILES NEED ARMOR-PIERCING CAPABILITY?

AND THIS LITTLE WHATEVER-IT-IS HERE, I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO FLY STRAIGHT WITH THOSE BOLTED ONTO THE SIDE...

JESUS, THE JOINT CHIEFS FORGOT TO CONSULT YOU AGAIN. WILL YOU PLEASE JUST GET THE DAMN THINGS ON THE RAILS?

BECAUSE BY THE LOOK OF WHAT'S BEEN FLYING IN--

15109

"YOU GOT EVERYTHING NOT IN PAKISTAN STILL TO GO."

SECURITY, STAND DOWN.

BUT SIR, WE--

STAND DOWN. I WON'T BE NEEDING YOU.

WISE.

THERE'S NOTHING THEY COULD DO TO HELP YOU, ANYWAY.

I SEE BUTCHER'S LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.

ONLY BECAUSE OF THIS NONSENSE OF YOURS IN WASHINGTON. I'D TELL YOU HOW MANY YEARS OF WORK YOU'VE RUINED, BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE YOU CARE IN THE SLIGHTEST.

STILL EIGHTY OVER SIXTY.

YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE TORN LIMB FROM LIMB, AND YOU'RE COMPLETELY CALM.

OH, LET'S NOT PRETEND I WAS GOING TO GET AN INVITATION TO THAT PARTICULAR PARTY. ONCE YOU HAD VIC IN PLACE AND THE DEFENSE CONTRACTS WERE COMING IN, WE WERE ALL GOING TO BE REPLACED.

YOU'RE GROWING THE NEW ME RIGHT NOW. SOME CAMO-CLOTHED TACTICAL GENIUS VERSION THAT DOES EXACTLY WHAT IT'S TOLD.

HMH.

I THINK I'VE FINALLY MET A SUPERHUMAN...

WHY, BECAUSE YOU'VE NEVER MANAGED TO IMPRESS ME?

THINK ABOUT IT. THIS IS PAR FOR THE COURSE WITH YOU.

WHEN HAVE YOU EVER DONE ANYTHING REMOTELY INTERESTING OR ORIGINAL? WHAT HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF TO DO THAT THE LOWEST SPECK OF THIS POINTLESS SPECIES COULDN'T, WERE THEY TO BE GRANTED YOUR LEVEL OF POWER?

AND WHAT NEXT, DESTROY ANOTHER AIRLINER? DISMEMBER MORE FAMILIES, THAT KIND OF THING?

A SPOILED CHILD'S PERSONAL AUSCHWITZ. IT'S SO PETTY IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE EMBARASSING.

I'M JUST GLAD I WON'T BE ALIVE TO SEE IT...

WHAT?

YOU KNOW, I THINK I'LL SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE. I'LL JUMP.

STOP FUCKING AROUND. YOU THINK I NEED TO IMPRESS YOU?

YOU SMUG FUCKING COCKSUCKING PRICK, YOU *REALLY THINK* I'M LOOKING FOR--

OH, GOD. KILL ME NOW.

JUST BECAUSE I STOOD AND TOOK YOUR SHIT, WHEN ANY TIME I CHOSE I COULD HAVE--

PLEASE KILL ME?

YOU--

YOU--!

...KEEP WATCHING.

JUST KEEP WATCHING. THAT'S ALL I'M GOING TO SAY.

I WILL, BELIEVE ME.

SHUT UP.

SHUT UP!

OR I WOULD, IF I THOUGHT YOU HAD SOMETHING WORTH SEEING.

I MEAN WE'VE DONE THIS FOR HIM AND VOUGHT, YOU'D THINK HE'D PUT OUT A STATEMENT OR SOMETHING...

YEAH, THE HOMELANDER SAID THERE'D BE SOMETHING ABOUT IT, LIKE VIC WOULD SAY WE WERE FIGHTING DAKOTA BOB LOYALISTS...

WHERE *IS* THE HOMELANDER, ANYWAY?

COMIN'.

WHAT THE FUCK YOU MEAN THEY STILL FIGHTIN'? YOU ***SUPERHEROES,*** GODDAMMIT...!

WE, WE DIDN'T HAVE ALL THE BULLETPROOF GUYS UP FRONT... IT GOT KIND OF CONFUSING WHEN WE WENT IN...

WHY HASN'T VIC SAID ANYTHING YET?

HE'S COMIN', HE'S ON HIS WAY.

HE SAID SECURE THE WHITE HOUSE FOR WHEN HE ARRIVES-- WE DONE THAT. ***YOUR TEAMS*** SHOULDA TAKEN THE PENTAGON BY NOW, SO WHAT THE FUCK'S KEEPIN' YOU FROM--

HOW COME THE COPS ARE STAYING PUT?

I MEAN THEY'VE BEEN TURNING CIVILIANS AWAY, BUT THAT'S ALL...IT'S LIKE THEY'VE BEEN TOLD TO LEAVE US BE...

MAYBE THEY WAITIN' TO SEE WHO WINS. MAYBE VOUGHT GOT IN TOUCH ALREADY.

CAN WE STICK TO THE GODDAMN POINT HERE? PLEASE?

OH FATHER!

OH FATHER, CAN WE GET THAT STATEMENT NOW--?

JESUS FUCKIN' CHRIST, YOU DIDN'T EVEN TELL SOMEONE TO *KEEP THEM OUTTA HERE...?*

NO COMMENT.

SIR, IN LIGHT OF--

NO COMMENT. THIS IS A DANGEROUS AREA, THERE ARE STILL DISSIDENTS INSIDE THE BUILDING.

SIR, ARE YOU STILL STICKING TO THAT STORY?

'FUCK YOU SAY?

OH FATHER, AMONG TONIGHT'S REVELATIONS WAS A CONFIDENTIAL REPORT CONCERNING THE RECENT MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF YOUR WARDS, THE JUNIOR TEAM *SIDEKICK TWELVE.* HAVE YOU READ THE REPORT?

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON *IT?*

JESUS, THE WHOLE BLOODY ARMY'S HERE...!

MARINES, HUGHIE.

EH?

THESE BOYS ARE MARINES. MIGHT BE A GOOD OMEN, I WAS A BOOTNECK MESELF.

THEN AGAIN, I DID GET MY LOT FUCKIN' KILLED...

ARE YOU *BUTCHER?*

THAT'S ME.

COLONEL JOHN LANHAM, MARFORCOM. SIR, I AM INSTRUCTED TO HAND OVER OPERATIONAL CONTROL TO YOU AND AWAIT YOUR ORDERS.

CHEERS, COLONEL.

THEY TOLD ME PROMOTION WAS ON THE CARDS, SO LONG AS I HELD ON LONG ENOUGH.

THAT'S AN AWFUL LOT O' FLYIN' WANKERS UP THERE. WOULD THAT BE YOUR TACTICAL ANALYSIS TOO, LANCE-CORPORAL CAMPBELL?

EH? OH.

AYE.

WHAT THEY BEEN UP TO, ANYWAY?

HOLDING THEIR POSITION, AT LEAST SINCE WE GOT HERE. THEY'VE BEEN WATCHING US ASSEMBLE, NOTHING ELSE.

ANY SIGN O' THE HOMELANDER YET?

MIKE, YOU SAW HIM?

AFFIRMATIVE, SIR, MAYBE TWENTY MINUTES AGO. DROPPED DOWN PAST THE REST AND ENTERED THE OVAL OFFICE.

NO SIGN SINCE.

BEYOND THAT, ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THEY SEEM TO HAVE KEPT IT FLIERS-ONLY AT THIS LOCATION. THE ONES AT THE PENTAGON ARE NEARLY ALL--I GUESS YOU'D HAVE TO CALL THEM THEIR GROUND FORCES.

HMH.

SIR, SPEAKING OF THE PENTAGON, I'VE BEEN GETTING REQUESTS...

NO.

LADS DOWN THERE'LL HAVE TO HANG ON AS BEST THEY CAN. IT AIN'T WORTH SPLITTIN' OUR FORCES HERE, NOT FOR SOME SORT O' RESCUE MISSION WE AIN'T GOT TIME TO PLAN RIGHT.

I CONCUR, SIR. WHATEVER HAPPENS--

I THINK IT'LL BE DECIDED HERE.

OH YEAH, WHAT ABOUT OUR AIR SUPPORT?

WHAT THEY'RE TELLING ME IS THERE'LL BE TWO GROUPS: ONE OF INTERCEPTORS, THE OTHER PRIMARILY A-10s. DIVISION OF TARGETS IS PRETTY OBVIOUS.

THEY'RE RELUCTANT TO INITIATE BEFORE DAWN; THEY WANT DAYLIGHT TO MINIMIZE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES.

LANHAM

MAKES SENSE. PLUS THEY CAN COME IN OUTTA THE SUN.

YOU KNOW, I COULD FUCKIN' MURDER A CUPPA...

THAT MEANS WHAT YOU THINK IT DOES, LIEUTENANT.

YES SIR. PRIVATE ZABARNOWSKI!

GO WITH HIM, HUGHIE. DON'T LET HIM MAKE COFFEE, WHATEVER YOU DO.

YOU KNOW WHO'D'VE LOVED ALL THIS?

OL' MALLORY.

33

...HUNDRED TWENTY MIKE-MIKE A.P. FIN STABILIZED. THAT PLUS EVERY SMALL ARMS D.U. ROUND IN THE INVENTORY.

TELL 'EM TO AIM FOR EYES, MOUTH, OPEN WOUNDS. THE TANKIES ESPECIALLY, MAKE SURE THEY GIVE IT FUCKIN' LOADS.

TA, COLONEL.

ALL RIGHT, HUGHIE, THAT'S ME...

EH?

WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT? WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT *OPEN WOUNDS*...?

GONNA TRY AN' MAKE A COUPLE.

I'M GOIN' IN THERE AFTER THE HOMELANDER.

BUT--
BUT--ON YER *OWN*...?

MM-HM.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS? D'YOU NO' WANNA WAIT FOR FRENCHIE AN' THE FEMALE AN' M.M.?

WRONG JOB FOR 'EM.

WE AIN'T MEANT TO BE SOLDIERS, HUGHIE. WE WATCH, WE LISTEN, WE PICK UP INTEL. WE ONLY HIT PEOPLE WE KNOW WON'T GIVE US TROUBLE, OR WE THINK WE CAN TAKE 'COS THEY'RE LOOKIN' IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.

I AIN'T CHUCKIN' THE BOYS AWAY ON SOME FUCKIN' BATTLEFIELD.

WHAT ABOUT YOU...?

WELL, THIS IS BETWEEN ME AN' CUNTYBOLLOCKS, INNIT?

I TOLD YOU IT WAS MY TURN.

YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE BY YERSELF! I'M COMIN' WITH YOU, THERE'S NO FUCKIN' WAY--

OH NO YOU BLOODY AIN'T. COLONEL, IF THIS LAD COMES AFTER ME, DON'T BOTHER TRYNNA GRAB HIM-- JUST HAVE SOMEONE BLOW ONE OF HIS KNEECAPS OFF, ALL RIGHT?

CHEERS, HUGHIE.

SEE YOU.

GODDAMMIT, *PICK UP*, YOU--

FRENCHIE?

BONJOUR, LAIT DE LA MER!

OH, *SHIT--!*

ALL IS WELL, MON BRAVE. LE COCHON AT VOUGHT WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD.

WHAT NEWS OF M'SIEU CHARCUTER, ET PETIT HUGHIE?

UH--FUCKED. IF I DON'T GET THROUGH TO ONE OF 'EM SOON.

THE WHOLE GODDAMN SYSTEM CRASHED, EVERYONE'S TALKIN' TO EVERYONE ABOUT THIS SUPE BULLSHIT...

M.M.?

HUGHIE? WHERE THE FUCK YOU AT, MAN? WHAT THE FUCK IS HAPPENIN'?

OH JESUS, WHERE TO BEGIN? THERE'S FUCKIN' SOLDIERS EVERYWHERE, THE SKY'S FULLA SUPES, AN' BUTCHER'S AWAY INTO THE WHITE HOUSE TO TAKE ON THE HOMELANDER SINGLE-HANDED...!

HUGHIE--

WHAT ABOUT BLACK NOIR?

UH, WHAT ABOUT HIM...?

YOU SEEN HIM? YOU HEARD ANYONE MENTION HIM?

NO...

I MEAN JUST ABOUT EVERY OTHER SUPE IN THE WORLD'S HERE, BUT NO' HIM.

THEY'RE JUST HANGIN' IN THE SKY WATCHIN' BUTCHER WALK IN THERE, THEY'RE NO' DOIN' ANYTHIN' TO STOP HIM...

YEAH, I BET THE GODDAMN HOMELANDER'S ALREADY LICKIN' HIS LIPS. YOU GO AFTER HIM, GET HIM TO COME THE FUCK BACK?

NO, HE MADE PRETTY BLOODY SURE I'D BE STAYIN' PUT. HE EVEN TURNED HIS PHONE OFF.

LISTEN, WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT BLACK NOIR?

FUCK. *FUCK.* HE--

OKAY, THE LEGEND GOT ME INTO VOUGHT'S SYSTEM AGAIN. I WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE IDENT CODE BEIN' BLACK NOIR.

HUGHIE, THIS WHOLE THING--I THINK IT MIGHTA BEEN ABOUT HIM ALL ALONG, MAN. I MEAN, WE COULDA BEEN LOOKIN' IN THE WRONG GODDAMN DIRECTION THE WHOLE TIME.

I MEAN THIS IS-- THIS IS THE FUCKED UP PARTA FUCKED UP. BUTCHER WALKS INTO THAT PLACE NOW, AN' SHIT'S GONE DOWN LIKE I THINK IT HAS?

HE AIN'T GONNA FIND NO FUCKIN' SUPERHERO WAITIN'.

HE GONNA BE UP AGAINST SOME OTHER SHIT ALTOGETHER.

next: MY NAME--IS MICHAEL CAINE.

#65 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

DA
RI
CK
2011

Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #65

DA RI CK 2011

ALL CALLSIGNS, THIS IS AWACS, WE HAVE YOU TURNING DUE WEST AFTER FINAL FORMATION R.V.. LOOKING GOOD.

YOUR TARGETS ARE SHOWING UP CLEAR AS DAY, AH, WE HAVE THE SAME MAGIC BOXES AS FITTED TO YOUR AMRAAMS AND WE ARE GETTING AN **AMAZING PICTURE...**

AH, ALL CALLSIGNS, AT THIS TIME YOU ARE WEAPONS-FREE, ACKNOWLEDGE?

BIG DUKE ONE, COPY THAT.

PREACHER ONE, COPY.

IDAHO LEADER, COPY.

CASTLE RED LEADER, ACKNOWLEDGED.

TOP CAT LEADER, COPY.

PAYBACK RED ONE, COPY THAT.

ARCHER LEADER, COPY LOUD AND CLEAR.

LET'S SEE WHO TAKES WHOSE FUCKIN' JOB.

LOOK AT THAT, HE DID HAVE BRAINS AFTER ALL.

OVER THE HILL WITH THE SWORDS OF A THOUSAND MEN

conclusion

SEE?

HNH--

THAT A DICKHOLE IN THE BACK OF IT?

WELL, YOU KNOW HOW IT IS.

IMPRESSIVE STUFF.

I'M NOT FUCKING TRYING TO FUCKING IMPRESS ANYBODY!!

I DON'T HAVE TO. THE WORLD'S MINE.

PEOPLE ARE TOYS, THEY'RE FUCKING *PASTE*, AND YOU AND VOUGHT AND ALL THE OTHER WORMSHIT CAN *FUCK YOURSELVES--!*

I DID THIS FOR ME. NOT SOME CORPORATE FAGGOT WIPING UP HIS CUM WITH BANKNOTES. *ME.*

BECAUSE I ALONE HAVE THE *MIGHT*--I CAN *TAKE* WHAT'S MINE, I DON'T HAVE TO SHARE, AND THAT MAKES THIS WHOLE FUCKING SHITBALL *MY BIRTHRIGHT...!*

SO REALLY JUST THE SAME OL' BOLLOCKS WE'VE HEARD FROM EVERY LITTLE ADOLF GETS A RUSH O' BLOOD TO THE COCK: YOU COULDN'T THINK OF NOTHIN' BETTER TO DO, COULD YOU?

WELL HERE'S YER PROBLEM. *CUNT.* PEOPLE AIN'T YER TOYS.

ONE OF 'EM IN PARTICULAR, SHE WAS THE EXACT FUCKIN' OPPOSITE O' THAT.

AH, OF COURSE. NOW WE'RE GETTING TO IT.

THE WIFE.

HE DON'T LOOK IT, BUT THE HOMELANDER WAS GROWN FROM STORMFRONT'S D.N.A..

STORMFRONT WAS JUST A KID INJECTED WITH COMPOUND V BACK IN THE THIRTIES, BEFORE VOGELBAUM TOOK HIM OUTTA GERMANY AN' HANDED HIM OVER TO V.A.C.. HE WAS HOT SHIT, NO DENYIN' THAT.

BUT THE HOMELANDER WAS SOMETHIN' ELSE AGAIN. THE V GOES INTO THE D.N.A. AN' THE WHOLE LOT GOES INTO A EMBRYO. SOME POOR BITCH GETS SET UP TO CARRY IT TO TERM.

THE LEGEND SAID...

RIGHT.

"WHICH IS WHY HE GROWS UP UNDERGROUND, WIT' A NUKE READY TO GO OFF IF HE LOOKS AT ANYONE SIDEWAYS.

"EVENTUALLY THEY FIGURE OUT, OKAY, CAN'T BLAME A NEWBORN KID FOR GOIN' CRAZY, JUST BAD LUCK HE HAS THE POWERS HE DOES. I MEAN BIRTH'S FUCKIN' TERRIFYIN' ANYHOW, THAT'S HOW COME NO ONE EVER REMEMBERS IT.

"VOUGHT PUT A LOTTA MONEY INTO THIS ASSHOLE, THEY DON'T WANNA JUST PULL THE PLUG. BUT ALL THE SAME, THEY AIN'T TAKIN' NO MORE CHANCES THAN THEY GOTTA."

THEY DECIDE THEY NEED A WAY TO PUT THE HOMELANDER DOWN IF IT EVER COMES TO IT. NOT A BOMB, SHIT LIKE THAT AIN'T PRACTICAL. SOMETHIN' THEY CAN USE ON HIM NO MATTER WHERE HE IS, SOMETHIN' THEY CAN SEND--

SOMEONE.

FUCK.

BLACK NOIR.

IN ONE. THEY TAKE THE D.N.A. AN' THEY FUCK AROUND WIT' IT SOME MORE. THEY GOIN' FOR SOMETHIN' ***NEW***--BETTER, STRONGER, ON ACCOUNTA WHAT HE'S GOTTA DO.

NOT THAT THEY TELL THE HOMELANDER ANY A' THIS. 'FAR AS HE'S CONCERNED, BLACK NOIR'S JUST SOME KINDA SIDEKICK--AN' THEN MAEVE AN' MARATHON AN' THE DEEP COME OUTTA THE SAME TEST TUBE, AN' ALL OF A SUDDEN THEY A TEAM.

"THE HOMELANDER'S HAPPY, 'CAUSE HE'S IN CHARGE.

"VOUGHT'RE HAPPY, 'CAUSE THEY GOT THEIR LIVIN' FUCKIN' WEAPON RIGHT NEXT TO ITS TARGET.

"BLACK NOIR'S HAPPY 'CAUSE IF HE EVER GETS THE WORD--AN' THIS IS THE GODDAMN REASON HE EXISTS, DON'T FORGET--HE CAN GET RIGHT THE FUCK TO IT."

SO--HAVE VOUGHT SENT BLACK NOIR AFTER HIM ***NOW?***

AIN'T THAT SIMPLE.

BRACE YOUR ASS.

I REMEMBER NOTHING ABOUT YOUR WIFE.

I'LL TAKE A GUESS AND SAY RAPE AND MURDER.

BUT I HAVE NO RECOLLECTION OF HER AT ALL.

THAT'S PRETTY TYPICAL. THERE ARE THINGS I REMEMBER AND THINGS I DON'T.

THE AIRLINER: YES. THE FAMILY AFTER BELIEVE: YES. THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE: NO. THE THINGS I'M DOING IN THOSE PICTURES:

"NO, DEFINITELY NOT. I WAS SHOCKED BEYOND BELIEF WHEN I SAW THOSE.

"THANKS FOR POPPING THOSE ON YOUTUBE, INCIDENTALLY. THERE REALLY IS NO GOING BACK FOR ME NOW."

WHAT IS ALL THIS FUCKIN' SHIT, YOU TRYNNA WIND ME UP?

I'M NOT DENYING THAT. BUT I'M NOT LYING.

YOU--

I CAN CUT YOU IN HALF BY LOOKING AT YOU. WHAT DO I HAVE TO BE AFRAID OF?

WHAT POSSIBLE REASON COULD I HAVE FOR NOT TELLING YOU THE TRUTH?

WHICH IS THAT I HAVE NO MORE MEMORY OF KILLING THIS CUNT OF YOURS THAN I DO OF MY FIRST SHIT.

HA HA HA HA, DO YOU KNOW WHAT I HAVE JUST REMEMBERED? SEEING YOU STANDING THERE WITH THAT FUCKING STUPID THING?

HA! HA HA HA HA HA!

MAEVE--*HA!* SPEAKING OF CUNTS!

MAEVE HIT ME WITH A SWORD...!

HHEEEENNNHHH

HHEEENNNHHH

WHAT--

WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE...?

HHEE--

TIME GOES BY AN' THE SEVEN MAKE VOUGHT A GODDAMN FORTUNE. HOMELANDER LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEHAVIN' HIMSELF. EVERYONE BREATHIN' A BIG FUCKIN' SIGHA RELIEF.

BLACK NOIR KINDA SLIPS INTO THE BACKGROUND. DON'T SAY MUCH, DON'T DO MUCH. COMPANY SHRINK CAN'T GET SHIT OUTTA HIM, JUST SAYS THE DUDE'S KINDA WITHDRAWN.

WHAT THEY DO SEE IS, HIM AN' THE HOMELANDER SEEM TO BE DOIN' OKAY. THEY AIN'T CLOSE, BUT THE HOMELANDER KINDA LIKES HOW BLACK NOIR'S ALWAYS AROUND--HE DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MUTHAFUCKA'S THERE FOR, ALL HE SEES IS SOMEONE FOLLOWS HIM PLACES AN' DOES LIKE HE DOES.

I MEAN THEY GO TO HEROGASM, THEY GO TO DOC PECULIAR'S... THEY EVEN FUCKIN' GIRLS TOGETHER, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT SHIT...

WELL WHAT'S, WHAT'S, WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WI' WHAT'S GOIN' ON NOW--?

"GETTIN' THERE.

"WHAT NEARLY SETS SHIT OFF IS THE PHOTOS WIT' THE HOMELANDER KILLIN' THEM FOLKS. WE DON'T KNOW WHO SENT 'EM, BUT WE MAKE SURE HIM AN' VOUGHT GET COPIES THE VERY NEXT GODDAMN DAY.

"ALL WE DOIN'S FUCKIN' WIT' 'EM, SAYIN'--WE KNOW THE BIG SECRET, DON'T EVER GET TOO FUCKIN' AMBITIOUS. 'COURSE, BLACK NOIR COMES A CUNT HAIR FROM GETTIN' THE KILL ORDER THEN AN' THERE, BUT WE NEVER KNEW THAT AT THE TIME..."

WELL WHY DIDN'T THEY JUST GO AHEAD WITH IT?

MONEY AGAIN. HOMELANDER'S A WALKIN' FUCKIN' LICENSE TO PRINT IT.

THEY LOOK AT SHIT REAL HARD AN' DECIDE IT'S WORTH THE RISK. FAMILIES WERE IDENTIFIED FROM THE PICTURES; TURNED OUT THEY WENT MISSIN' SIX YEARS BEFORE. SO THIS GETS CALLED AN ISOLATED INCIDENT.

WELL THEY'RE EVIL FUCKERS, BUT...I STILL DON'T SEE...

YEAH.

THERE AIN'T MUCH ELSE IN BLACK NOIR'S FILE. ALL I COULD DO WAS THINK THROUGH WHAT **WE** KNOW ABOUT HIM. WHICH AIN'T MUCH.

JUST MORE QUESTIONS.

HOW DID HE SURVIVE FALLIN' FIVE GODDAMN MILES ON NINE-ELEVEN? HE AIN'T SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO FLY.

WHY WOULD HE DO THAT SHIT TO YOU AT HEROGASM, THEN NOT TELL THE RESTA THE SUPES WE THERE?

HOW CAN HE CUT A DUDE IN HALF AN' WRECK A PLANE AN' WALK AWAY ***ON FIRE,*** AN' NOT EVEN FUCKIN' REACT TO THAT SHIT? 'CAUSE THAT'S WHAT THE REPORT ON IT SAYS, ***NO SIGNS OF DURESS EXHIBITED WHATSOEVER.***

AN' I THOUGHT ABOUT IT. AN' THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

AN' I WONDERED...WHAT IF THE HOMELANDER WASN'T EVER THE ONE THAT NEEDED WATCHIN'?

NO...NO, THAT...

I MEAN WHAT HE WAS DOIN' FROM THE START, EVEN WHEN HE WAS BORN...!

NO. JUST THINK ABOUT A ONE-MINUTE OLD BABY WITH SUPERPOWERS.

NOW TRY THIS: YOU'RE BLACK NOIR, YOU GOT ONE JOB TO DO AN' ONE JOB ONLY, ONE SINGLE FUCKIN' REASON TO BE ALIVE.

"AN' IT LOOKS LIKE THE SON OF A BITCH AIN'T NEVER GONNA OBLIGE YOU.

"IS IT POSSIBLE...*JUST POSSIBLE*...THAT YOU MIGHT DO SOMETHIN' TO TRY AN' *MAKE IT* HAPPEN?

"IS THERE SOME WEIRD FUCKED-UP CORNER A' YOUR MIND WHERE YOU CAN MAKE THAT SHIT MAKE SENSE?"

WAIT A MINUTE, HE'D HAVE TO BE COMPLETELY FUCKIN' *INSANE*--!

HE'S SITTIN' ON THE KINDA POWER MEANS YOU CAN BENCH A DOZEN MACK TRUCKS, AN' HE CAN'T USE IT. HE'S A ASSASSIN LIVIN' WIT' HIS TARGET. PERMANENTLY.

THAT BE ENOUGH TO GET HIM THERE?

I MEAN SHIT, HUGHIE, HE'S A FUCKIN' *SUPE*--IT AIN'T EXACTLY LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE. NOW MAYBE HE WENT CRAZY 'CAUSE A' THE JOB THEY GAVE HIM, MAYBE HE WAS LIKE THAT ALL ALONG--LIKE THEY FUCKED UP THE D.N.A. RIGHT AT THE--

NO-NO-NO-NO-NO, HANG ON, THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT! IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER BLACK NOIR'S MENTAL OR NOT, THE HOMELANDER **DEFINITELY IS!**

THERE'S WHAT HE'S DOIN' IN THE PHOTOS--FOR FUCK'S SAKE, THERE'S WHAT HE DID TO BUTCHER'S--

YEAH.

IS THERE?

UM, COME AGAIN?

I WAS THINKIN' IT THROUGH, LIKE I SAID.

STARIN' AT HIS PICTURE IN THE FILE. THAT STUPID FUCKIN' MASK STARIN' BACK AT ME.

NO EYES. NO MOUTH. JUST BLACK.

I'M THINKIN' *I CAN'T EVEN SEE YOUR FACE, MUTHAFUCKA...*

REMEMBER THE TRANSCRIPT WHEN THE HOMELANDER CALLS BLACK NOIR?

GETS HIM TO COME DOWN THERE SO THEY CAN TRICK MAEVE INTO FUCKIN' HIM?

AN' OUTTA NOWHERE IT FLASHES INTO MY HEAD.

THE SHIT YOU GOT ON MAEVE, THAT YOU STOLE FROM THE DOC'S.

HL: She'll never know, she won't figure it out until afterwards. We're the same size and everything, it's just too fucking good to be true. It's going to be hilarious.

Okay, I'll take the heavy breathing as a yes. I'll see you soon. Third from the front on the east side. Don't fuck it up or we'll never get another shot.

HHEEEEENNNNHH

HHEEEEENNNNHH

I DID THINGS

YOU...

YOU'RE...

I PUT ON YOUR SILLY SUIT AND I

DID THINGS

...YEAH.

YOU FUCKIN' DID, DIDN'T YOU?

HHEEENNNHH

SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST *THAT*

SO MANY THINGS THEY'LL *NEVER* KNOW

LOVELY THINGS I LIKED SO *MUCH*

SO LOVELY SO *SCARY*

BUT HAD TO KEEP DOING THEM

HAD TO GET READY FOR

THE *BIG* ONE

OH MY GOD.

IT WAS YOU.

IT WAS YOU IN THOSE FUCKING--

HHEENNNHHHH

I *TOOK* THEM

CLICK CLICK

CLICK CLICK

I *TOOK* THEM

WHY, FOR FUCK'S SAKE...?

TOLD ME

TO *KILL* YOU

BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET ME DO IT WOULDN'T SAY DO IT WOULDN'T *SAY*

SO LONELY

SO SCARED

SO EXCITED

FOR SO *LONG*

GOT THE LITTLE PEOPLE GOT YOUR SILLY SUIT GOT MY *CAMERA*

THEN I GOT MY PICTURES BUT IT'S *SCARY*

SO BIG SO *SCARY*

KEEP MY PICTURES KEEP THEM THEN WE HEAR ABOUT

HIM

SEND HIM MY PICTURES

HE KNOWS WHAT TO DO

HHEEEEENNNHHH

OH JESUS

WHAT HAVE I DONE

ARE YOU SCARED?

OF THE NOTION, BY ANY SANE MEASURE OF REALITY--

THAT YOU'VE DONE SOMETHING CATASTROPHIC?

WHY CAN'T I DO THE THINGS I CAN DO...?

I WAS ALWAYS TERRIFIED... BECAUSE I WASN'T...

I'D NEVER HAVE DONE *ANY OF THIS* IF I DIDN'T THINK I'D ALREADY--

IF THAT WASN'T ME IN THE--

OH JESUS CHRIST ALMIGHTY.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?

IT MEANS YOU TURNED INTO A FUCKIN' PSYCHOPATH BY MISTAKE.

AN' FUCK. THEM. UP.

GOT TONE. GOT A LOCK.

ARCHER LEADER, FOX THREE.

OKAY, JUST CHILL. LET THEM COME TO US.

WE TOO SMALL FOR THEM TO PAINT US ON RADAR, JUST DUCK WHATEVER THEY THROW AT US AN' THEN GET IN AMONGST 'EM.

FOX THREE.

FOX THREE.

FOX THREE.

FOX THREE.

FOX THREE.

FOX THREE.

JESUS FUCKIN' CHRIST!!

WATCH IT, YOU STUPID SHIT--!

MOVE, MOVE! OUTTA THE WAY!

OUTTA THE FUCKIN' WAY!

NO!!

YOU FUCKING FUCKING FUCK YOU FUCKED MY LIFE!!!

FUCK ME--

JESUS!

HEY--!

FUCK!

LOOK TO YER FRONT! LOOK TO YER FRONT!

YOU'RE GONNA HAVE A TARGET ANY SECOND, BOYS, SO GET FUCKIN' READY!

LISTEN, I'M JUST OFF THE PHONE WITH M.M! BLACK NOIR'S--

THE SPIT O' THE HOMELANDER AN' HE'S THE ONE DONE IT ALL. YEAH.

HOW...?

RIGHT, SHIFT YER ARSE THERE, MATE.

DUDE, ARE YOU LIKE ENGLISH OR SOMETHING--?

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT, DUDE.

I'M LIKE ENGLISH.

OH, FUCK, I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THAT...!

SHOULD WE HEAD OVER THERE? LIKE MAYBE HELP?

AFTER YOU...

COWARDS--!

WHY DON'T THEY FACE US?!

FACE US!!

WHAT?

YOGI LEADER, ROLLING IN.

OH MY FUCKING GOD--!

RUN!!

AH, TARGETS LOOK TO BE DISENGAGING, HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THE POTOMAC--

AAAAAAAHH!!

SUPE SOUP.

BIG DADDY AND BUFFALO SQUADRONS, GET SOME WHILE YOU CAN.

YOU GOTTA BE FUCKING KIDDING ME.

HHEEENNNHHHH

HHEEENNNHHHH

COME ON, MARINES! POUR IT ON!

BODYBAG THE MOTHERFUCKER!!

SIR?

HHEENNNHHH

HHEENNNHHH

HEE--

MMF--

YOU KNOW...

I'M ALWAYS TELLIN' PEOPLE NOT TO MAKE A SONG AN' DANCE AT TIMES LIKE THIS.

BUT HERE WE ARE AFTER ALL THESE FUCKIN' YEARS.

THE WAY I SEE IT, THERE MIGHT BE ENOUGH O' THIS SHIT STILL WORKIN' THAT YOU'RE HOLDIN' ONTO ONE OR TWO MEMORIES.

AN' IF I'M LUCKY, THIS BIT HERE...THIS BIT *RIGHT FUCKIN' HERE...*

THIS IS THE NIGHT YOU DONE WHAT YOU DONE TO MY BECKY.

AH, JOE STEPHENS AND HIS PEOPLE JUST MADE IT THROUGH TO THE PENTAGON, SIR, THEY WANT TO KNOW IF WE'RE TAKING PRISONERS?

HUH.

NOW THAT IS A GOOD QUESTION.

GIVE US A MINUTE HERE, WILL YOU, MATE?

AYE...

SURE.

OH, BECKY.

I'M SORRY, LOVE.

THAT AIN'T WHAT YOU WOULD'VE WANTED AT ALL.

THAT WAS A HUNDRED PERCENT ME, YOU WOULD'VE HATED WHAT I'VE DONE WITH ME LIFE.

AN' WHAT I'M GONNA DO NEXT--

YOU'D HATE THAT MOST OF ALL.

THE END

#66 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #66

D'YOU KNOW THE PROBLEM WITH D.U. AMMO, VAS?

I MEAN FUCK KNOWS IT'S USEFUL STUFF, I DOUBT THAT BARNEY AT THE WHITE HOUSE WOULD'VE GONE QUITE AS WELL WITHOUT IT. D-38 PENETRATORS'LL GO THROUGH ALMOST ANYTHIN'.

BUT...

WELL, HOW DEPLETED IS DEPLETED, REALLY? ALL THESE LADS COMIN' BACK FROM PAKISTAN WITH THEIR BALLS ROTTIN' OFF, D'YOU THINK THERE MIGHT BE A CONNECTION THERE?

HANDLIN' IT... LOADIN' IT...WALKIN' THROUGH THE PLACES AFTER THE BOMBS AN' SHELLS'VE GONE OFF, MAYBE EVEN PICKIN' UP THE BODIES...

HHRRRGGGHH...!

HNNGH--

YOU MIGHT SAY IT'S AS BAD FOR THE BLOKE DONE THE SHOOTIN' AS THE POOR SOD HE SHOT.

NNNNNGGGHH--

WORSE, EVEN, CONSIDERIN' HOW LONG THE SHITE TAKES TO FINISH YOU OFF.

NOT THAT THAT'S GONNA BE A PROBLEM IN MY CASE. BUT IT MAKES YOU THINK.

NAAAAH, BILLY, I CANNOT LET YOU DO THIS...!

WRONG AGAIN, ME OL' SON.

HAVE A DEKKO UP THERE.

WHAT THE FUCK YOU DOIN' TRYNNA HIDE HIM IN HERE, ANYWAY? D'YOU THINK I'M ARNIE SCHWARZENEGGER AN' IT'S GONNA BOLLOCKS UP ME SENSORS?

MAKES SENSE HIM GOIN' TO YOU. I MEAN IT'S A CRYIN' SHAME, BUT AT LEAST I KNEW TO COME PREPARED.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAHH!!!

AAAH--
AAAAAHH--!

FUCKIN' HELL, MATE, THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO FINISH YOU OFF...!

YOU WAS A TANKIE, WASN'T YOU? THAT'S WHY YOU AN' MALLORY GOT ON SO WELL.

I WAS JUST INFANTRY, MESELF. I CAN REMEMBER BEIN' ON EXERCISE, YOMPIN' ALONG IN THE PISSIN' RAIN, WATCHIN' THE CUNTS IN THE CHIEFTAINS ROARIN' PAST AN' KILLIN' THEMSELVES LAUGHIN'...

HOW D'YOU KNOCK OUT A TANK THEN, VAS?

EASY.

THE BLOODY DOORS OFF

part one

...TOP STORY AGAIN, PRESIDENT NANCY PELOSI HAS SAID SHE HAS **NO DESIRE** TO SEEK HER PARTY'S OFFICIAL NOMINATION, AND THAT HER ADMINISTRATION WILL REMAIN A PURELY **TRANSITIONAL ONE**...

MRS. PELOSI, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, TOOK POWER UNDER THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION ACT OF NINETEEN FORTY-SEVEN **LAST NOVEMBER**--AFTER THE SUDDEN DEATHS OF PRESIDENTS **ROBERT SCHAEFER** AND **VICTOR NEUMAN.** TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT COMES AS LITTLE SURPRISE TO MOST OBSERVERS, THE PRESIDENT HAVING SPOKEN OF PLAYING A **CARETAKER ROLE** FROM THE BEGINNING.

IT HAS OF COURSE SPARKED **MASSIVE SPECULATION** ABOUT WHICH CANDIDATES EACH PARTY **WILL BE** FIELDING THIS YEAR--MORE COVERAGE ON THAT IN OUR FIRST ELECTION OH-EIGHT UPDATE **TONIGHT**...

RIGHT NOW, WITH THE TIME COMING UP TO TEN A.M., WE'D LIKE TO WELCOME TO THE STUDIO VICE-ADMIRAL **DONALD FOLTZ**--FORMER SURGEON GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY, WHO'S HERE WITH SOME INSIGHTS INTO LAST YEAR'S CATACLYSMIC **SUPERHUMAN MELTDOWN.** VICE-ADMIRAL FOLTZ, GOOD MORNING.

GOOD MORNING, ANTHONY. THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME ON THE SHOW.

SO ONE OF THE MANY REVELATIONS TO COME OUT OF THOSE TRAGIC EVENTS IS THAT SUPERPOWERS ARE NOT IN FACT **GOD-GIVEN**; THEY'RE THE RESULT OF A CHEMICAL COMPOUND KNOWN AS **V**. BUT THIS IS SOMETHING OF A WORST-KEPT SECRET, ISN'T IT?

THAT'S RIGHT, ANTHONY, IT'S BEEN COMMON KNOWLEDGE IN CERTAIN SCIENTIFIC QUARTERS--NOT TO MENTION CERTAIN CRIMINAL QUARTERS--FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS.

BUT WHAT'S EMERGING NOW, ACCORDING TO RECORDS SUBPOENAED FROM VOUGHT-AMERICAN, IS THAT COMPOUND V IS NOT JUST SOME NARCOTIC ENHANCEMENT OR LAB ESCAPE THAT'S RESULTED IN ONE OR TWO UNPLANNED SUPES. IT'S ACTUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF THEM FROM THE TOP DOWN: THE HOMELANDER, STORMFRONT...

BLACK NOIR, QUEEN MAEVE, THE G-MEN, TEAM TITANIC...

RIGHT, RIGHT. EVERY SINGLE SUPE, EVERY SINGLE TEAM.

AND IT'S LOOSE IN EVERY ECOSYSTEM ON THE PLANET, AND IF WE'RE NOT EXTREMELY CAREFUL IT'S GOING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR A LOT MORE.

AND THIS IS WHERE IT GETS EVEN MORE INTERESTING, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

RIGHT. FROM WHAT I'VE READ OF THE VOUGHT MATERIAL--AND I CAN'T REVEAL EVERYTHING, BECAUSE THE ACTION AGAINST THE CORPORATION IS CURRENTLY ONGOING--EVEN THE MOST CAREFULLY CONTROLLED V-PROCESSES COULD LEAD TO **ENTIRELY RANDOM RESULTS.**

MEANING...?

MEANING THEY NEVER QUITE KNEW WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO GET, BUT IT DIDN'T STOP THEM EVEN ONCE.

AND YOU HAVE SOME QUITE SPECIFIC CONCERNS ABOUT THAT, CORRECT?

I DO INDEED.

VOUGHT-AMERICAN'S **GRAND PLAN** INVOLVED REPLACING THIS COUNTRY'S SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN WITH **COMBAT-CAPABLE SUPERHUMANS.** BUT IF SUPES CANNOT ACTUALLY **BE DESIGNED**--AND IT SEEMS THAT OVER SIXTY PERCENT OF VOUGHT'S OWN EFFORTS HAD TO BE **EUTHANIZED**--

THIS IS THE RANDOM FACTOR YOU MENTIONED?

YES, AS AN EXAMPLE: YOU TAKE STORMFRONT'S D.N.A. AND ALTER IT TO MAKE A STRONGER VERSION OF THE HOMELANDER. YOU GET THAT, BUT YOU ALSO GET A COMPLETE PSYCHOTIC WHO HAPPENS TO BE HIS **PHYSICAL TWIN.**

YOU GET BLACK NOIR.

AND JACK FROM JUPITER, AND MISTER MARATHON, AND THE LAMPLIGHTER, ALL FROM THE SAME PROCESS AND THE SAME GENETIC SOURCE. AND THAT'S PLANNING?

SO REGARDING YOUR POINT ABOUT DESIGN, THEN...

WELL HERE IT IS IN A NUTSHELL, ANTHONY: IF THEY NEVER ACTUALLY KNEW HOW TO DESIGN THEIR SUPES, WHAT THE HELL WAS IT THEY WERE PLANNING ON SELLING US?

AH, THAT'S A REALLY INTERESTING QUESTION, DO YOU...?

LET'S JUST SAY IT WOULDN'T'VE BEEN THE FIRST TIME THESE PEOPLE HAD RIPPED OFF UNCLE SAM. TRY GOOGLING **VOUGHT-AMERICAN-CONSOLIDATED, M-20, AND F7U...**

--FINAL POINT I'D LOVE TO GET YOUR THOUGHTS ON, AH...WITH THE FEW SURVIVORS OF THE INSURRECTION UNDER INTERNMENT, AND THE ALLEGEDLY UNINVOLVED SUPES LYING LOW, AND THE CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY INTO V.A. NOW PENDING...

WELL, THE SUPERHUMAN COMMUNITY OBVIOUSLY HAS VERY FEW SUPPORTERS RIGHT NOW. BUT GIVEN THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THOSE INVOLVED WERE APPARENTLY **NOT** FULLY AWARE OF THE HOMELANDER'S TRUE INTENTIONS, SOME PEOPLE HAVE ASKED WHY THEY WERE NOT SO INFORMED, AND--FOLLOWING ON FROM THAT--GIVEN THE CHANCE TO SURRENDER TO THE AUTHORITIES.

NOW, YOU'RE A MILITARY MAN, BUT YOU'RE ALSO A DOCTOR--

FILES

FILES

NO COMMENT.

OKAY, BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN A SUGGESTION THAT A **LESSON** WAS--

BUT NICE TRY, ANTHONY. THANK YOU.

UM...CAN I'VE A WORD FOR A SECOND, BOYS?

FUCKSAKE. HE WOULDN'T EVEN'VE HAD TO TALK.

BOYS, I THINK OUR JOB HERE'S OVER AN' DONE WI'. I THINK IT'S TIME WE QUIT.

UH-HUH.

KIND OF A COINCIDENCE, HUGHIE. WE BEEN SAYIN' THE SAME THING.

OH AYE?

I GOT FAMILY SHIT I *CAN'T* BE PUTTIN' OFF NO MORE. BARELY KNOW WHERE TO START, BUT I GOTTA.

AND I--*I* HAVE BEEN BATTLING EVERY FRENCHMAN'S BURDEN: THE SPECTRE OF ***ENNUI,*** THAT STALKS MY EVERY WAKING CHEESE...

P.T.S.D.

ALSO, LA FEMME HAS BEEN SMILING AGAIN. GIGGLING, EVEN, EVER SINCE PETIT HUGHIE'S REVELATION DE MASTURBATION.

I BELIEVE SUCH MERRIMENT MIGHT MEAN NEW HOPE. I THINK WE OWE HER SUCH A CHANCE, HOWEVER SMALL.

SOMETHING TO BE EXPLORED FURTHER...FAR, FAR FROM HERE.

WELL THAT'S, UH, THAT'S BRILLIANT, HEN. I'M REALLY HAPPY I COULD BE PARTA YER...YER BREAKTHROUGH...

AND WHAT OF YOU, PETIT HUGHIE? IS IT MORE WANKING TIME?

NO, IT'S NO' MORE-- LOOK, THERE IS NO--

FOR CHRIST'S *SAKE*...!

IT'S... THE THING I HAVE ABOUT VIOLENCE, JUST.

I KEN YOU KEN, YOU'VE HEARD ME GO ON AN' ON ABOUT IT. I'M NO' GONNA START WHINGEIN' AGAIN NOW. BUT...

ALL RIGHT, HE TOLD YOU I KILLED A-TRAIN, AYE?

HE DIDN'T?

AW, FUCK ME.

WHEN THE FUCK YOU KILL A-TRAIN?

IT WAS IN THE MIDDLE O'...WHEN EVERYTHIN' WAS GOIN' MENTAL. HE BROUGHT ME UP TO THE ROOF AN' HE HAD A-TRAIN TIED UP THERE. AN' HE MADE ME...MADE ME...

HE *MADE YOU--?*

WELL NO' PHYSICALLY, BUT HE SET IT UP. I MEAN I FUCKIN' HATED THE BASTARD ANYWAY, WI'--WI' WHAT HAPPENED AN' EVERYTHIN', BUT I JUST LET MYSELF GET WOUND UP AN' UP AN' UP...

I FEEL FUCKIN' AWFUL ABOUT IT. BECAUSE IT WAS THE SORTA THING *HE'D DO.*

AN' AFTERWARDS I COULD SEE THAT HE APPROVED.

AN' THAT'S THE WEIRD THING. HE SAID HE DID IT TO TOUGHEN ME UP--BUT IN THE END HE WOULDN'T LET ME DO ANYTHIN'.

HE WENT IN AFTER THE HOMELANDER ALL ON HIS OWN, AN' HE FINISHED BLACK NOIR OFF BY HIMSELF TOO. ALL I DID WAS STAND AN' BLOODY WATCH...

YEAH.

I DUNNO WHAT THE FUCK HE WAS THINKIN' WIT' A-TRAIN. COULD BE HE FIGURED HE OWED YOU THAT, BEIN' IT'S WHAT GOT YOU INVOLVED INNA FIRST PLACE.

BUT THE POINT IS, HE DONE THE SHIT HE HAD TO DO. THE MUTHAFUCKERS'RE DEAD. AN' WE THROUGH TOO, VOUGHT AIN'T CLIMBIN' OUT OF A HOLE THIS GODDAMN BIG.

WE ALL DONE, PEOPLE.

TIME WE WENT THE FUCK HOME.

OUI.

WHO WILL INFORM M'SIEU CHARCUTER?

...HANG US OUT TO DRY FOR WHAT IS, IN ESSENCE, THE KIND OF AGGRESSIVE BUSINESS PRACTICE THAT'S BECOME COMMONPLACE. THAT EVERYONE GETS AWAY WITH ALL THE TIME.

MAKE NO MISTAKE, THIS IS AN ASSAULT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: NOT JUST ON OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL DIVISION, BUT ON THE ***ENTIRE VOUGHT-AMERICAN FAMILY.*** WELL, WE ARE GOING TO FIGHT BACK--AND GET THROUGH THIS--***AS*** A FAMILY.

THANK YOU.

THIS REMINDS ME OF THE DAY WE MET...

LESS CHAMPAGNE. MORE LEPROSY.

DREADFUL STYLE OF RHETORIC BREWSTER GOES IN FOR. YOU DON'T MENTION FAMILIES AND FIGHTING IN THE SAME SENTENCE, YOU TALK EITHER SHELTER OR DEFIANCE...

ALSO PATHETICALLY TRANSPARENT.

IF THESE CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS GO AS BADLY AS THEY'RE EXPECTED TO, YOU AND I WILL BE FLUNG TO THE WOLVES.

INDEED.

LET'S TAKE A CAREFUL LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE.

D'YOU MIND?

MI CASA, SU CASA.

GENERALLY, THE PUBLIC HAS A HIGH TOLERANCE FOR THE RELEASE OF SECRETS. FOR JARRING TRUTHS BEING THROWN IN ITS FACE.

TAKE WIKILEAKS. FOR OVER A YEAR NOW THEY'VE BEEN RELEASING ALL KINDS OF MATERIAL, YET WHETHER THROUGH APATHY OR IMPOTENCE THE MOST COMMON RESPONSE HAS BEEN--YES. THE WORLD WORKS THE WAY I ALWAYS SUSPECTED.

BUT THAT WON'T APPLY TO US. WE WENT TOO FAR.

WE...BROKE THROUGH SOME BARRIER, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF WHICH IS TOO MUCH HORROR FOR PEOPLE TO ABSORB.

WE ARE *PERCEIVED* AS HAVING DONE SO. WHY?

THE IDEA OF GROWING SUPERHUMANS--FOR MILITARY SERVICE OR ANYTHING ELSE--IS DISTURBING, BUT NOT ILLEGAL. IT WILL BE, NOW THAT IT'S PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, BUT HAD WE GONE AHEAD AS PLANNED WE WOULD HAVE BEEN ONE MORE DEFENSE CONTRACTOR SUBMITTING A TENDER.

AT THE MOMENT THERE IS NO ACTUAL CONNECTION BETWEEN OUR PLANS AND WHAT THE HOMELANDER DID, WE ARE SIMPLY BEING TARRED WITH THE SAME BRUSH. WE GENUINELY KNEW OF NOTHING AMISS.

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE: WE SUSPECTED.

SOLUTION: NEVER, EVER SAY SO AGAIN.

THE PICTURES?

GONE. WE NEVER SAW THEM.

TOO BAD THE F.B.I. DISCOVERED THE LAMPLIGHTER. I MEAN SOME OF THE STUFF JACK AND MAEVE HAD UP THERE WAS BAD ENOUGH, BUT... GOD, THAT FOOTAGE OF HIM ON C.N.N...

NOTHING ON THIS EARTH WOULD HAVE STOPPED THEM GETTING A WARRANT.

OUR FOCUS MUST BE ON WHAT GOES BEYOND THE-WORLD-WORKS-AS-I-SUSPECTED. SUPERHUMAN KINKS AREN'T ENOUGH ANYMORE, NOT WITH FRESH REVELATIONS OF DECADENCE EMERGING DAILY...

HOW ABOUT REANIMATED CORPSES?

IT ISN'T THE FIRST TIME THE LAMPLIGHTER'S WASHED UP ON AN AWKWARD SHORE. WE DEALT WITH HIM THEN AND WE'LL DEAL WITH HIM NOW: I SUSPECT THROUGH CAREFUL LEGAL ARGUMENT REGARDING THE WORD ***REANIMATED.***

SHALL I TELL YOU OUR REAL CONCERN?

THE PRESIDENT...?

DENTS. PLURAL.

DAKOTA BOB, VIC THE VEEP, THE SECRET SERVICE, RED RIVER. THE ENTIRE UNDERTAKING--FORTUNATELY, AT LEAST FOR US--PRE-EMPTED BY AN EXOTIC PET AND ECLIPSED BY THE HOMELANDER'S EPIC INSANITY.

THAT WOULD GO BEYOND.

SO WHAT WE DID, WE KEEP SECRET. WHAT WE DIDN'T...YOU KNOW WHAT WE NEED TO FIGURE OUT?

GO ON.

THE MOST CREDIBLE WAY TO SAY TO CONGRESS: ***WE NEVER KNEW.*** IF WE CAN SEPARATE VOUGHT FROM THE INSURRECTION--AND WE HAVE THE TRUTH ON OUR SIDE THERE--THAT JUST LEAVES PUSHING SUPES ON THE MILITARY.

THE-WORLD-WORKS-AS-I-SUSPECTED.

HMM.

I'M SURE WE CAN COME UP WITH SOMETHING TOGETHER.

I CAN'T IMAGINE A BETTER WAY.

GOOD TRIP?

IF YOU LIKE THAT SORTA THING. MUCH OCCURRIN'?

YOU SAW THE EMAILS...

YEAH.

YOU GOT A MINUTE?

YEAH, 'COURSE. AS A MATTER O' FACT, THERE'S A COUPLA THINGS I WANTED TO MENTION TOO.

FIRST OF ALL, IT'S BLEEDIN' OBVIOUS THERE'S FUCK ALL TO DO AROUND HERE. I KNOW WE HAD ALL THAT BUMF TO PUT TOGETHER FOR RAYNER, BUT THE COMMITTEE'S GOT ITS START DATE AN' AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED IT'S JOB DONE.

THE SUPES'LL STICK THEIR HEADS UP SOONER OR LATER. THERE'S A NEVERENDIN' SUPPLY O' THE CUNTS. BUT JUST FOR NOW, I THINK WE COULD DO WITH A BREATHER.

SO I'LL HOLD THE FORT HERE, AN' YOU LOT CAN HAVE THREE MONTHS OFF. HOW'S THAT SOUND?

M'SIEU CHARCUTER...!

YOU SURE 'BOUT THIS?

YOU GONNA BE ALL RIGHT, LIKE, LIKE WI'--

THE OTHER THING-- MM--

THE OTHER THING IS WHEN WE DO COME BACK, HUGHIE'S GONNA BE TWO I/C.

CONGRATULATIONS, MY SON. YOU ARE NOW ENTITLED TO A FUNNY SALUTE FROM ALL CONCERNED AN' A HAT WITH A BIG FUCKIN' BELL ON IT.

TWO... WHAT...?

OH, SORRY, MATE. SECOND IN COMMAND.

YOU KNOW, LIKE YOU WANTED.

WHAT AM I TALKIN' ABOUT? HUGHIE, YOU STOOD RIGHT THERE IN DOC PECULIAR'S, IT WAS JUST AFTER YOU COME BACK, AN' YOU TOLD ME THAT WAS WHAT YOU WERE AFTER. YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION-MAKIN', ALL THE WAY ON THE INSIDE.

SECOND IN COMMAND. AN N.C.O.. I SAID I'D THINK ABOUT IT.

WHAT? NO! I NEVER--

WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT...?

OH, FUCK, I FORGOT ALL *ABOUT THAT...!*

I MEAN--

I--

I...

AW HEN, NO, LET ME EXPLAIN--!

I THINK YOU HAVE ALREADY DONE SO, PETIT HUGHIE...

YEAH, YOU ALL OVER THE MUTHAFUCKA.

SO WHAT WAS IT YOU WANTED TO TELL ME, THEN?

YOU KNOW HOW LONG I BEEN PARTA THIS? YOU SEE ME LOOKIN' FOR A GODDAMN BUMP UP?

BUT-- BUT--

SHIT, YOU OUGHTA KNOW, NUMBER A' TIMES YOU COME TO ME FOR ADVICE...

NO, NO, YOU DON'T GET IT, THINGS WERE DIFFERENT WHEN--

NO DOUBT THEY WERE...*PETTY* HUGHIE...

WHAT--?!

AW FRENCHIE, DON'T BE LIKE THAT! IT WAS STUPID, I JUST WASN'T THINKIN'!

OUI, MON COMMANDANT...

FRENCHIE...!

MAN--

WHAT THE FUCK?

YOU CAN'T SEE YERSELF SALUTIN' HUGHIE?

WH--

COME ON, I'M ONLY JOKIN'...

LOOK, HE WANTED IT SO I GAVE IT TO HIM. YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S LIKE, HE'S ALWAYS HAVIN' A WOBBLE ABOUT SOMETHIN'--I THOUGHT IF HE HAD THIS IT MIGHT SORT HIM OUT A BIT.

AN' LET'S FACE IT, IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S GONNA ***MEAN*** ANYTHIN'. WE'RE BOTH A BIT LONG OUTTA UNIFORM FOR THAT CHAIN O' COMMAND BOLLOCKS, AIN'T WE?

JUST CARRY ON DOIN' THE JOB YOUR WAY, YOU KNOW RESULTS SPEAK LOUDEST ROUND HERE.

IN THE MEANTIME--TAKE SOME ***TIME OFF,*** MATE. RELAX FOR A BIT. I MEAN WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW JANINE?

FRENCHIE. VOTRE DEAREST CHUM.

AW, DON'T DO THAT, FRENCHIE! ***DON'T!***

LA FEMME. WHO FEEDS YOUR HAMSTER UP, THAT NO SUPE CAN USE HIM AS A BUTT-PLUG.

BUT I'M NO' GONNA SEE YOU FOR THREE MONTHS...!

LONGER, IF WE SEE YOU FIRST.

HAVE A NICE DAY, MON BRAVE.

ANNIE, WHAT D'YOU MEAN YOU'RE LEAVIN'? *WHY?*

YEAH, WHY, AFTER YOU GAVE ME THE WORLD ON A SILVER PLATTER...

AW, WE DON'T HAVE TO STAY HERE! WE CAN GET A PLACE WHEREVER WE WANT!

KIDDING, HUGHIE.

I TRIED TO TELL YOU, I SAW SOME PRETTY AWFUL THINGS WHEN EVERYTHING WENT TO SHIT LAST YEAR. I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT THEM.

I'M GOING TO... I DON'T KNOW, GO SOMEWHERE QUIETER FOR A WHILE. SEE IF I CAN GET THIS STUFF OUT OF MY HEAD.

WHERE...?

NOT SURE YET. MAYBE OUT WEST, I LIKED IT THERE.

ANNIE, HANG ON...!

LOOK, THE STUFF YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT, I KEN HOW YOU FEEL. I'VE SEEN ALL SORTS OF AWFUL SHITE, IF YOU WANNA TELL ME ABOUT IT I'LL LISTEN...

I'LL BET YOU HAVE, YOU AND YOUR LITTLE C.I.A. HIT SQUAD. BUT IT'S NEW TO ME.

I'VE TRIED TALKING TO YOU, ABOUT THIS, ABOUT EVERYTHING, AND ALL WE DO IS GO ROUND AND ROUND IN CIRCLES. I'M GOING TO *DO* SOMETHING FOR A CHANGE.

AW, THAT'S NO'-- THAT'S--

LOOK, IF YOU'RE...*PUNISHIN' ME,* BECAUSE O' THE WAY I LEFT YOU...

THAT'S RIGHT, HUGHIE. IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU.

BUT I--!

LISTEN.

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF I STAY OR GO. WE WON'T BE TOGETHER EITHER WAY, WILL WE?

BUT WHAT ABOUT...YOU FOUND ME?

MAYBE IT'S JUST A LINE.

THE STUFF YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT ME, YOU CAN'T GET PAST IT. MAYBE YOU NEVER WILL.

GIVE ME SOME TIME. CALL ME IF YOU WANT ME-- AND I MEAN *WANT ME.* OKAY?

HULLO, MISTER POTAMUS...

YEAH?

YOUR MOTHER'S

HOLE

?

Vas Text
yesterday

EH?
AW, THAT'S NO' EVEN A WORD, VAS.

JESUS.

AW--!

FUCK...

SAKE...!

9

HHHH.

WELL, AT LEAST I'VE STILL GOT YOU, JAMIE.

C'MON, GET BACK IN YOUR WHEEL NOW. YOU KEN YOU'RE MEANT TO BE LOSIN' WEIGHT.

ME AN' THE FAT HAMSTER, THEN.

CHRIST.

next: SPLENDIDDIO...

#67 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

REJECTED

REJECTED

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REJECTED

Darick
Robertson's
final inks for
his cover
to #67

THOU CANST NOT SAY T'WAS *THEE* CREATED TEK-KNIGHT! OH, *FALSE!* WHY NOT HAVE DONE WITH IT, AND CLAIM THE *REST OF PAYBACK* FOR THINE OWN!

THOU DIDST CASH THE CHECK! T'WAS *THAT* WHICH SERVED FOR CONTRACT! *NEVER SHAKE THY GORY LOCKS AT ME!*

THE BLOODY DOORS OFF

part two

MM? *HMH.*

SORRY, KID, WHAT WAS IT YA WERE *SAYIN'*...?

AH, I WAS, AH...ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

SURE...

I WAS JUST SAYIN' IT'S ALL COMIN' TO BITS ON US. THERE WAS ALL THE SHITE THAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY, AN' THIS MORNIN' THERE'S THIS BLOODY EMAIL FROM LANGLEY.

EMAIL...?

THEY'VE *REVOKED OUR CITIZENSHIP.* ME AN' FRENCHIE AN' THE FEMALE, THEY WERE COPIED ON IT--WE'VE ALL GOT NINETY DAYS TO GET OUT O' THE COUNTRY.

THANKS FOR YOUR SERVICES TO THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, YOUR UNIT'S REMIT IS HEREBY CANCELLED, FEEL FREE TO FUCK OFF. I MEAN NO' IN SO MANY WORDS, BUT...

AN' *BUTCHER?*

HIM TOO. BUT HE'S NO' ANSWERIN' HIS PHONE, AN' HE WASN'T IN THE OFFICE WHEN I WENT BY.

THIS IS FUCKIN' *RAYNER.* THE LITTLE COOZE IS *CLEANIN' HOUSE* FOR THIS *RUN* SHE'S *MAKIN'.* LAST THING SHE WANTS IS *THE BOYS* COMIN' UP WHEN SHE'S ON *BILL O'FUCKIN' REILLY*...

SEE THERE! BEHOLD! *LOOK!*

IF THY ESTATES AND CURSED DEPENDENTS LAUNCH LAWSUIT AFTER LAWSUIT IN THY NAME, OUR MONUMENTS SHALL BE THE MAWS OF KITES!

AVAUNT! AND QUIT MY SIGHT! THY BONES ARE MARROWLESS!

SOLDIER BOY! STORMFRONT! WEBWEAVER! STARBOARD! ALL WERE MINE, THOU DIDST NO MORE THAN SCRAWL THY DOODLES AT MY BIDDING!

HENCE, HORRIBLE SHADOW! UNREAL MOCKERY, HENCE!

IT...

IT WILL HAVE BLOOD, THEY SAY.

BLOOD. WILL. HAVE. BLOOD.

HUH? WHAT THE HELL'RE YA DOIN' DOWN THERE?

I--

SAY, DID YA HEAR ABOUT OL' VAS...?

VAS? UH...

AYE, HE TEXTED ME YESTERDAY. MADE NO BLOODY SENSE AT ALL, MIND YOU.

HE WHAT? YOU BEEN SMOKIN' THE MARIDGE-OO-ANNA, KID?

VAS IS DEAD, SOMEONE CUT HIM IN HALF WITH A GODDAMNED ROCKET-LAUNCHER...!

'COURSE I DID.

FINDIN' PEOPLE'S WHAT I DO.

AN'...YOU RENTED THE PLACE IN YOUR OWN NAME. I PRETTY MUCH GOT OFF THE PLANE AN' COME STRAIGHT HERE.

JANINE, I AIN'T ANGRY WIT' YOU, HONEY.

I AIN'T GONNA YELL AT YOU OR NOTHIN' ELSE LIKE THAT.

I'M JUST HERE TO BE YOUR DADDY.

I, UH...

I KNOW I MESSED UP. I MEAN THAT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT, I DON'T THINK I COULD HAVE DONE ANYTHING WORSE.

BUT... COMING FROM YOU?

THAT REALLY IS SOME LINE.

YEAH...?

OH, JESUS.

I KNOW LOTS OF KIDS WHERE ONE OF THEIR PARENTS ISN'T AROUND MUCH. AND THEY KIND OF LATCH ONTO THE OTHER PARENT. AND SOMETIMES THE OTHER PARENT ISN'T MUCH GOOD FOR THEM.

SO NOTHING NEW THERE.

AND I ***KNOW*** BEING WITH YOU IS BETTER THAN BEING WITH MOM. I ALWAYS KNEW THAT.

BUT YOU WEREN'T AROUND, YOU WENT OFF AND HAD THESE ***GAPS*** WHERE I HARDLY EVER SAW YOU--AND D'YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU WHAT YOU WEREN'T AROUND FOR?

I'M TWELVE.

I KNOW TH--

I HAD MY FIRST PERIOD WHEN I WAS SIX. IT SCARED ME TO DEATH. I MEAN MY BODY MIGHT HAVE MATURED FASTER, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN MY HEAD WAS READY FOR IT.

ALL MY FRIENDS ARE PLAYING WITH DOLLS AND MEANWHILE I'M A WOMAN. AND IT'S LIKE THERE IT WENT, JANINE, THAT WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD...

YOU KNOW ALL THIS. YOU KNOW WHY, TOO.

BECAUSE OF THIS SHIT THAT'S IN MY VEINS.

THAT MUCH IS NOT YOUR FAULT.

BUT YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT I WENT THROUGH AN AWFUL LOT ON MY OWN, JUST BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T THERE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT MIGHT BE COMING NEXT, EITHER, AND YOU'VE NEVER BEEN THERE FOR ME TO TALK TO ABOUT THAT.

I WILL BE, I--

SO IS IT REALLY ALL THAT SURPRISING I TURNED TO MOM?

I GET THAT. WHATEVER I THINK OF HER. AN' I GET WHY YOU'RE MAD AT ME.

BUT--JANINE, HONEY--

I MEAN GOD *DAMMIT...!*

A PORNO MOVIE?

I'M NOT GOING TO PRETEND IT WASN'T DISGUSTING. OR THAT MOM'S FRIENDS WEREN'T JUST SUCH TOTAL SKEEZES.

SHE GAVE ME A LITTLE BUMP TO GET ME THROUGH IT. BUT THEN SHE'D BEEN GIVING ME LITTLE BUMPS FOR THE PAST YEAR, ANYWAY, OR I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STAND HER...

WHERE SHE AT?

OH, STOP IT.

JANINE, I GOT TO TALK TO HER. HER AN' THESE F--THESE FRIENDSA HERS.

LOOK, IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE LIKE THAT, I DON'T THINK I CAN EVEN DO THIS...

LOOK--

I'M TRYING, OKAY? I'M TRYING. I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH, I'M HAVING THE FATHER-DAUGHTER CONVERSATION JUST LIKE I'M SUPPOSED TO.

BUT IT'S NOT VERY EASY WITH YOU PRETENDING YOU DON'T KNOW HOW WE GOT HERE, OR THAT I'M NOT UNDER FUCKING *SUSPENDED SENTENCE OF DEATH...!*

JANINE?

HONEY, WHAT YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?

AW, VAS.

WHAT A SICKENER.

WELL, THAT'S WHAT *HAPPENS* IN THIS GAME, KID. YOU GOT ANY IDEA HOW *LUCKY* THE FIVE A' YOU WERE, COMIN' THROUGH ALLA THIS AN' ONLY LOSIN' A *DOG*...?

I'D A PAL O' MINE BACK HOME GOT KILLED TOO. BUT HE...

THIS GAME? WHAT WAS IT HE WAS DOIN', ANYWAY?

DUNNO... BUT I HEARD ON THE GRAPEVINE THEY FOUND HIM *SPREAD ALL OVER THE PLACE,* AN' IT DIDN'T LOOK TOO FUCKIN' *SELF-INFLICTED*...

BUT I *DID* GET A TEXT FROM HIM YESTERDAY. EXCEPT IT WOULD'VE BEEN THE DAY BEFORE.

HERE, HANG ON--

NOW WHAT THE *HELL* DOES THAT MEAN...?

SEARCH ME.

BUT...D'YOU THINK HE DID THIS WHILE HE WAS...?

POOR SON OF A BITCH...

FUCK. *FUCK.*

JUST THE BLOODY THOUGHT OF HIM LYIN' THERE.

DON'T *DO IT TO YOURSELF,* KID.

VASILI VORISHIKIN: GOOD GUY FOR A FUCKIN' IVAN, LOTTA HEART, HUNG LIKE A GODDAMN ***SPERM WHALE.***

AYE.

A-MAN.

1971-72

1967

'MAZING!

WHY WOULD HE BE TEXTIN' ME AT A TIME LIKE THAT, D'YOU THINK?

SAY *DOSVIDANJA...?*

WE MET TWICE. I MEAN WE HIT IT OFF, BUT I DOUBT I'D BE THE ONE SPRINGIN' TO MIND IN HIS LAST MOMENTS ON EARTH.

WHO THE FUCK KNOWS AT A TIME LIKE *THAT?*

ABOUT YOUR *OTHER* PROBLEM...YOU GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO WHETHER YOU *WANNA* STAY ON...?

WHAT, HERE, OR WITH THE BOYS? OR EITHER?

I DUNNO IF THEY EVEN WANT ME, I MANAGED TO SERIOUSLY PISS OFF M.M. AN' THE OTHER TWO. THANKS TO BUTCHER AN' HIS BIG BLOODY MOUTH.

BUT I DO HAVE A GIRL I'M NO' QUITE READY TO GIVE UP ON.

AN'...IT SOUNDS DAFT, BUT...I FEEL LIKE IF I DO HAVE TO LEAVE NEW YORK, THERE'S A PART O' ME'S ALWAYS GONNA BE IN MOURNIN'.

IT SOUNDS LIKE THE WORDS OF A *SMART FUCKIN' MAN.*

TRY *MONKEY.*

MONKEY...?

THAT'S WHERE *I'D* START, IF I HAD TROUBLE WITH *RAYNER.*

SOUND HIM OUT, SEE IF YOU CAN FIGURE YOUR *ANGLE OF ATTACK...*

BUT-- WHY HIM?

BECAUSE HE'S THE ONLY CONNECTION YOU *GOT* TO THE BITCH...!

COME ON, KID, YOU SPENT THE LAST COUPLA YEARS AROUND SOME O' THE SMARTEST MOTHERFUCKERS I EVER *MET*...AIN'T YOU LEARNED *NOTHIN',* FOR CHRIST'S SAKE...?

UH...AYE.

RIGHT.

WELL THANKS FOR THE DRINK--

SAY...WHAT WAS THAT THING *VAS* SAID AGAIN? *WHAT* WAS THE MESSAGE...?

T-THREE-FOUR-ATLENIN.

ATLENIN? AT LENIN...

T-THIRTY-FOUR. *YEAH.*

WHAT?

IF IT'S T-*THIRTY-FOUR* IT'S A KIND OF *TANK.*

COMMIE MODEL.

I DUNNO WHAT IT'S SUPPOSED TO *MEAN,* BUT A T-THIRTY-FOUR'S A *TANK.*

"YOU'RE TELLING ME YOU KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THIS?"

I... DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THIS IS...

REALLY.

SERIOUSLY.

BECAUSE IF YOU'RE MAKING ME GO THROUGH IT JUST TO PUNISH ME, FOR SOME MESSED-UP REASON OF YOUR OWN...

JANINE...!

IT WAS UNCLE BILLY.

WHAT--?

HE SHOWED UP RIGHT AFTER THE THING WENT VIRAL. THE DAY MOM EMAILED YOU, HE SHOWED UP AT THE OFFICE THAT SAME NIGHT.

I GUESS HE CAME STRAIGHT FROM THE AIRPORT TOO.

ARE YOU *SURE* HE DIDN'T TELL--

JANINE, DON'T STOP TALKIN' *NOW*--!

I THINK HE JUST WANTED MOM'S ADDRESS, BUT IT SO HAPPENED WE WERE THERE TO HAVE A MEETING. TO TALK ABOUT A SEQUEL, BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

I NEVER...WHEN I WAS A KID I DIDN'T REALLY KNOW UNCLE BILLY. HE SMILED A LOT, HE HAD HIS FUNNY ACCENT. BUT I HARDLY SAW HIM, I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT WHO HE WAS OR WHAT THE TWO OF YOU *DID*...

HE KILLED JULIUS FIRST.

ONE LOOK AT HIM AND YOU KNEW HE MEANT SERIOUS BUSINESS. SO CHUCKY--HE WAS THE PRODUCER, HE WAS THE GUY THAT MOM HOOKED UP WITH IN THE FIRST PLACE--CHUCKY JUST SNEERED AND KIND OF NODDED TO JULIUS TO DEAL WITH HIM.

JULIUS WAS CHUCKY'S BODYGUARD, HE WAS ALSO IN A LOT OF THE FILMS. HE WAS SIX FEET EIGHT.

UNCLE BILLY REACHED UP AND KIND OF GRABBED HIS HEAD AND--

HE TURNED IT BACK TO FRONT. ONE SECOND JULIUS IS FACING AWAY, AND THE NEXT THERE'S THIS ***KLUNK*** AND HE'S LOOKING RIGHT AT ME, AND HE'S ***AMAZED***...

HE DID THIS SHIT ***IN FRONT OF YOU...?***

IT WAS ALL FOR MY BENEFIT, DADDY.

DON'T YOU GET THAT?

THE LOOK ON HIS FACE...IT WAS LIKE WE WERE DISGUSTING TO HIM, BUT ALSO WE WERE THIS GIANT INCONVENIENCE THAT HE COULD HARDLY EVEN BE BOTHERED DEALING WITH.

I FELL OFF MY CHAIR. MOM WENT FOR THE DOOR. HE RAMMED CHUCKY'S HEAD INTO THE WALL. IT WAS ONLY LATER ON I THOUGHT--YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD JULIUS TO SIT DOWN, YOU SHOULD HAVE SCREAMED AT EVERYBODY NOT TO PISS HIM OFF...

BUT I WAS USELESS.

AND I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HAVE MADE ANY DIFFERENCE.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE DAY HE CAME TO GET YOU, TWO OR THREE YEARS BACK? WHEN I WAS MEAN TO YOU, DO YOU REMEMBER THAT?

YEAH...

"THERE WERE SOME BOYS OUTSIDE.

"THEY WERE IDIOTS. I WAS HANGING OUT WITH THEM TO GET AT YOU. UNCLE BILLY SCARED THEM OFF, THEN HE TOLD ME TO STOP TREATING YOU LIKE SHIT.

"HE SAID I WAS LUCKY TO HAVE SOMEONE LIKE YOU FOR A FATHER."

LUMPS

WHAT HE DID WAS-- ONE OF THESE BOYS, HE HAD A GUN--

AND UNCLE BILLY TOOK IT OFF HIM, AND HE LOOKED HIM IN THE EYE AND JUST *CRUSHED IT.*

AND THAT'S WHAT HE DID TO MOM IN FRONT OF ME.

NO EFFORT. NO EMOTION. CAN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THAN A SECOND.

HE JUST... PUSHED HER...

MOTHERFUCKER.

MOTHERFUCKER, MY GODDAMN *DAUGHTER,* MOTHER--

YOU KNOW WHAT HE SAID TO ME, DADDY? WHILE HE WAS KILLING MOM? WHILE HE WAS LOOKING ME IN THE EYES AND JUST *DESTROYING HER?*

HE SAID-- HE SAID--

OH, GOD.

"YOU LEAVE THAT MAN ALONE."

BUT MISTER KESSLER, YOU CAN'T JUST GET *RID* OF US--!

WRONG AGAIN.

BUT IF YOU'D JUST TALK TO ME, IF YOU'D JUST EXPLAIN WHAT--

ONCE MORE FOR THE HARD OF HEARING?

YOUR SERVICES ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED. YOU HAVE NINETY DAYS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. THE BOYS ARE DISBANDED. THE END.

MISTER KESSLER, WE'VE DONE SO MUCH FOR YOU! I MEAN YOU KNOW THAT BETTER'N ANYONE, YOU AN' MISS, MRS, MS. RAYNER...!

YOU WERE PART OF A COVERT OPERATIONS UNIT. NOTHING YOU DID CAN BE PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED.

SO HOW MUCH USE DO YOU THINK YOUR RECORD IS TO ME, AND TO MISS, MRS, MS. RAYNER IN PARTICULAR?

BUT LISTEN, NO, NO, LISTEN! I MEAN--I MEAN BUTCHER'S NO' GONNA SIT STILL FOR THIS, HE--

BUTCHER GOT HIS POUND OF FLESH ON THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN, I DON'T THINK WE'RE GOING TO BE HEARING FROM HIM.

FACE IT, LITTLE MAN: YOUR EXCITING ADVENTURE WITH THE TOUGH GUYS IS OVER. TIME TO RETURN TO OBSCURITY.

I'M HANGING UP NOW.

ALL RIGHT, MONKEY. YOU WANNA PLAY IT THAT WAY?

WHAT DID YOU CALL--

JUST LISTEN.

DO YOU ***REALLY*** THINK RAYNER'S GONNA HAND OVER TO YOU WHEN SHE FUCKS OFF?

D'YOU THINK A GUY WHO GOT FUCKED UP THE ARSE BY A BULLDOG AN' ENDED UP CLEANIN' MONKEY SPUNK OUT OF HIS EARS--D'YOU THINK ***YOU'RE*** GONNA GET HER RECOMMENDATION FOR ***HEAD O' THE C.I.A.?***

WH-WH-WHAT--?

SHE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT--

HE TOLD ME, FOR FUCK'S SAKE. D'YOU THINK HE DIDN'T TELL HER ABOUT IT, SOME ROMANTIC FUCKIN' EVENIN' WHEN HE'D FINISHED SHAGGIN' HER OVER HER DESK?

I BET THEY HAD A RIGHT BLOODY LAUGH. AN' WE'VE NO' EVEN TOUCHED ON THE PARALYMPICS THING YET, I MEAN SHE'S GOTTA BE WONDERIN' HOW THAT'LL LOOK IF IT EVER COMES OUT IN THE WASH...!

IF I WAS YOU I'D BE THINKIN' ABOUT WHO ***CAN*** HELP YOU. LIKE IF THERE'S ANYONE YOU KEN WHO COULD DELIVER SOMETHIN' TO MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE A STAR.

I--I--

SEE THE NEXT TIME I PHONE YOU, SUNSHINE? HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS FOR ME.

AN' BE READY TO BE A FUCKSIGHT MORE POLITE.

DID I JUST...PULL A BUTCHER?

MAY-DEC '89 VICTORY

FLASHBACK

SUSPENSO

WOULDA MADE A NICE LITTLE FAMILY PHOTO.

IF DOC PECULIAR HADN'T FARMED HIM OUT TO SOME KIDS' HOME IN PADDY LAND.

NOT GOT ONE O' THE BLARNEY COCK?

MAY DEC '89 VICTORY

COME ON, YOU DON'T WANNA WAKE THE TWO ARSEHOLES UPSTAIRS.

NEEEEEHH--!

FOR THEIR SAKE, IF NOTHIN' ELSE.

WHAT'S... WHAT'S...?

YOU KNOW.

OR YOU'LL WORK IT OUT.

HE'S BEEN TO SEE YOU ALREADY, AIN'T HE? BOUND TO HAVE, WITH RAYNER AN' THAT. WHAT'D YOU TELL HIM?

I DIDN'T SAY SHIT, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE--

WELL, MAYBE HE'LL TELL YOU SOMETHIN', AN' YOU'LL PUT TWO AN' TWO TOGETHER.

MAYBE HE'LL COME DOWN HERE TOMORROW AN' SAY... VOGELBAUM.

AN' THAT I CANNOT HAVE.

JESUS *CHRIST.*

AFTER EVERYTHING I...AFTER ALL THIS *FUCKIN' TIME--!*

YEAH, WELL.

RATHER YOU THAN HIM.

NO--!

HNNHH!

NO! NO! NO! *NO!*

NNEEEEEEEEHHH

UHHHHHHH...!

I'M SHITFOOT!

IT'S TH' 'POCALYPSE

I LIKES CANDY!

AW NO.

AW SSSHIT.

SHPLENDIDDIO...

YOU FUCKIN'

COCK

THERE YOU ARE, JAMIE.

THERE YOU GO, WEE PAL.

ALL RIGHT, SMART MAN, LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN PULL AN M.M....

SO A T-THIRTY-FOUR'S A TANK.

A TANK. VAS. VAS AN' A TANK.

UNLESS IT IS T-THREE-FOUR, AN' THIS IS ALL A LOADA--

T-34

WAS TANK COMMANDER.

ARMY IS SHIT NOW. BACK THEN WAS MIGHTY SOVIET JUGGERNAUT, COULD HAVE PUSHED NATO FAGGOTS WHOLE WAY TO ENGLISH CHANNEL. NO OFFENSE.

FUCK, WAS IT HIS TANK?

OUT OF SOVIET SERVICE IN THE FIFTIES, NO, HE WOULDN'T'VE BEEN... HANG ON.

T-THIRTY-FOUR ATLENIN.

T-THIRTY-FOUR *AT LENIN,* WHAT IF IT'S HIM?

JAMIE...WHAT IF IT'S AN EMAIL ADDRESS?

YOU DON'T PUT *AT,* YOU PUT THE WEE SQUIGGLY THING. BUT IF YOU'RE LYIN' THERE WI' BLOOD ALL OVER YOU, TRYNNA SEND A TEXT--YOU MIGHT FORGET THAT.

YOU MIGHT *DIE* BEFORE YOU PUT DOT COM.

Untitled - Message (HTML)

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To: t34@lenin.com

CC:

Subject: Vas?

PROBABLY BOLLOCKS... TRY DOT ORG, SEND...

TRY DOT NET, SEND...

WAIT A MINUTE, WAIT A MINUTE, HE'S FUCKIN' RUSSIAN, HOW'S HIS NORMAL ADDRESS END...?

DOT RU... *SEND.*

From: T34@LENIN.RU

Subject: Re: Vas?

Date: January 8, 2008 23.11.07 EDT

To: weehughie@mac.com

This is an automated response

Little Hughie, if you read this I am dead and my worst fears are true. I am sorry

"I AM SORRY FOR SECRET CRYPTIC BULLSHIT BUT I DID NOT WANT TO BELIEVE THIS THING. I SET UP TO REACH YOU FAST AS POSSIBLE IF ALL WAS REAL.

"CLICK ON LINK AND YOU WILL SEE WHAT I DO NOT HAVE HEART TO TYPE:"

M.M. Mobile
calling...
End Call

HEY. I-- OH AYE?

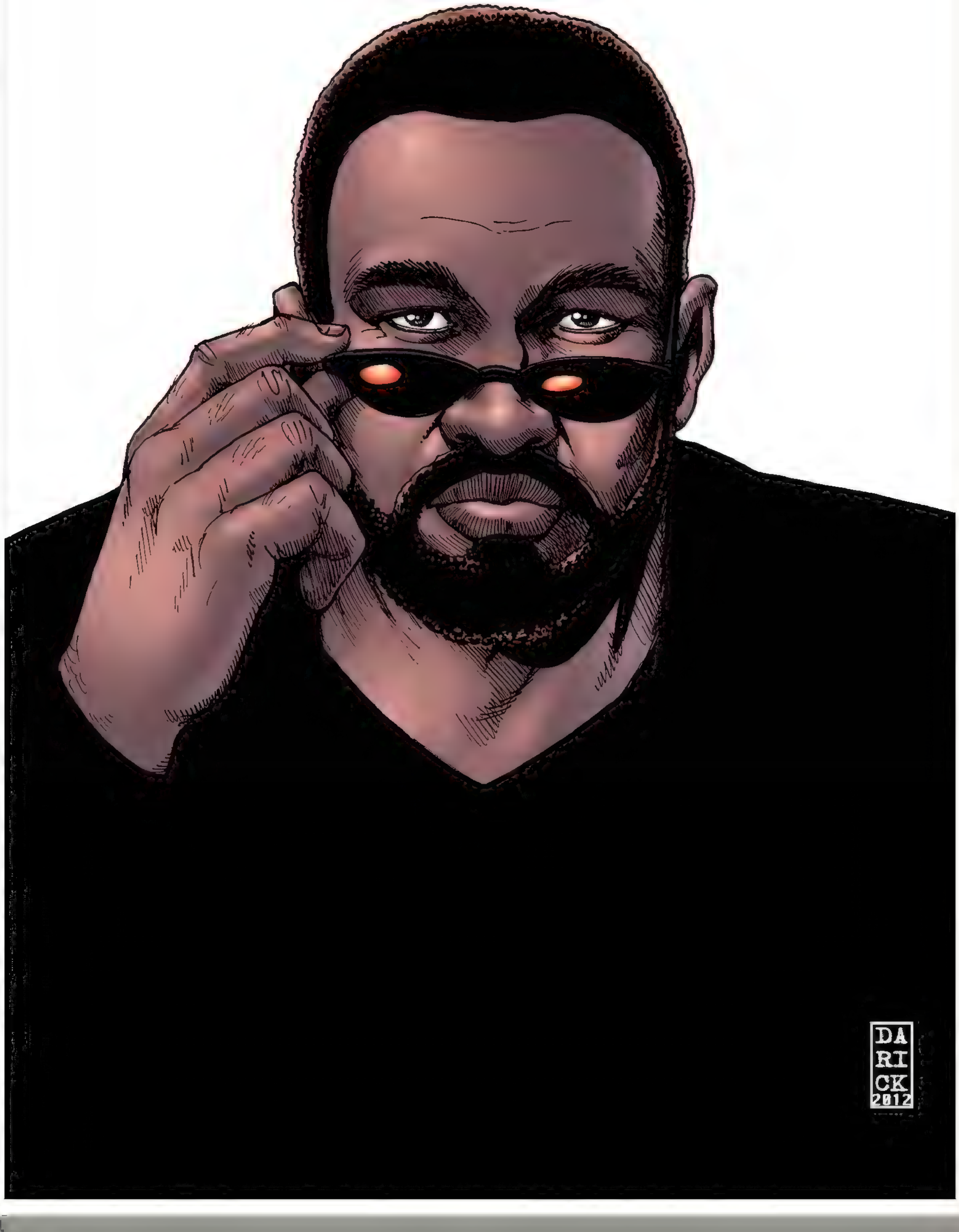
WHAT TIME D'YOU GET IN?

RIGHT, 'CAUSE I DUNNO WHAT HE'S DONE TO YOU--

BUT I'M PRETTY FUCKIN' SURE I'VE GOT IT BEAT.

next: DO YOU KNOW WHAT I HATE?

#68 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña



DA
RI
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Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #68

IAMITE
RTAINMENT
BOOK
ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FOR FULL BLEED AND REGULAR COMIC P
ISSUE
PAGE
ARTIST(S)
BOOK
ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FO
FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN, ABUT PAGE EDGES, TAPE ON BACK. DO NOT OVERLAP
ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKEN LINE BOX (LIVE AREA
◀ CUT RIGHT HAND PAGE AT THIS LINE
FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN, ABUT PAGE EDGES, TAPE ON BACK. DO NO
ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKE

TIME WE ALL FACED UP TO THE EIGHT HUNDRED POUND GORILLA IN THE ROOM...

AND IT IS NOT MY COCK!

THE BLOODY DOORS OFF

part three

PARDON... *PARDON*...

JE SUIS DESOLE...

FOR FUCK'S SAKE, FRENCHIE, THIS IS SERIOUS--!

OF COURSE IT IS, MON CAPITAINE. YOU CALL AND WE COME RUNNING, WE ARE HERE TO SERVE.

M.M. CALLED YOU...!

I MEAN JESUS CHRIST, IT WAS A MISTAKE, ALL RIGHT? I'M SORRY, IT WAS BLOODY DAFT!

BUT THE THING WAS I'D FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT IT, BUT *HE HADN'T*--AN' HE USED IT, HE STORED IT AWAY AN' HE BROUGHT IT UP WHEN IT'D DO THE MOST--

THE EIGHT HUNDRED POUND GORILLA'S WHAT THE FUCK BUTCHER'S DOIN'.

WHAT HE'S BEEN DOIN' ALL ALONG.

LISTEN.

HE SPLIT US UP. HE GAVE US TIME OFF AN' HE GOT YOU PISSED OFF AT ME, SO WE'D NO' BE IN THE WAY WHEN HE GOT STARTED.

I REALLY APPRECIATE YOU COMIN' BACK. HONESTLY.

BUT THE LEGEND'S DEAD. I HAD SEAN MCGUINEA SCREAMIN' DOWN THE PHONE AT ME AT SIX O'CLOCK THIS MORNIN'.

AN' VAS IS DEAD TOO, AN' IT'S STARTIN' TO LOOK PRETTY BLOODY CERTAIN BUTCHER DID THEM BOTH.

PETIT HUGHIE... AH...

COME ONCE MORE?

D'YOU REMEMBER THAT OTHER VERSION O' COMPOUND V, THE STUFF WE RAN INTO IN RUSSIA? BLOWS PEOPLE'S HEADS APART, IF YOU GET THE DETONATION FREQUENCY JUST RIGHT?

OUI...

I THINK BUTCHER'S GOT HOLD OF A LOAD OF IT.

AFTER WE WENT HOME, THE COPS FOUND ABOUT A HUNDRED AN' FIFTY DEAD SUPES--HEADLESS--IN ONE O' LITTLE NINA'S WAREHOUSES. THE ONE ME AN' HIM WENT TO.

VAS HEARD ABOUT IT AN' GOT SUSPICIOUS. PUT THE WORD OUT, BIG REWARD FOR INFORMATION. WHAT HE WASN'T EXPECTIN' WAS A FELLA CALLIN' HIM LAST YEAR, SAYIN' HE'D BEEN WORKIN' FOR AN ***ENGLISH GUY***--WHO BOUGHT WHAT WAS LEFT O' NINA'S STASH AN' STARTED REFININ' MORE.

THE FELLA DID THE WORK FOR HIM THERE IN MOSCOW. NICE AN' QUIET, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

VAS WENT TO THIS GUY'S OFFICE, SAW THE PAPERWORK TO SEND THE STUFF TO FLORIDA. THE GUY SAID HIS ***EMPLOYER*** WAS ON HIS WAY OVER AGAIN TO FINISH UP AN' PAY THE LAST INSTALLMENT, AN' COULD HE HAVE THIS BIG REWARD NOW, PLEASE?

THE WAY VAS SAW IT, IF IT WAS BUTCHER, IT WAS PRETTY OBVIOUS WHAT THE LAST INSTALLMENT WAS GONNA BE. SO STICKIN' WI' THAT PARTICULAR THOUGHT, HE CHECKED THE BOY'S PHONE.

BUGGED.

BEFORE WE PROCEED ANY FURTHER...HOW MUCH OF THIS ***MATERIEL*** IS IN EXISTENCE?

ONE HUNDRED AN' EIGHTEEN METRIC TONS.

Monkey
office
HANG ON, BOYS, I'VE BEEN WAITIN' ON THIS WEE PRICK...
SPEAK.
UM... HELLO?
THAT WAS HELLO, YOU DOSS BASTARD.
UM, RIGHT, UM...THAT THING YOU ASKED ABOUT THIS MORNING? YOU KNOW, WHAT IT WAS THAT BUTCHER ACTUALLY GAVE US?
WELL, I DIDN'T WANT TO TALK TO RAYNER DIRECTLY, I DON'T WANT HER KNOWING I'M IN TOUCH WITH YOU. I MEAN SHE'S ***GONE,*** BUT TECHNICALLY I'M ONLY THE CARETAKER HERE, AND IF SHE FINDS OUT I'M NOT PLAYING BALL--
GET TO THE FUCKIN' POINT. QUICK.
"OKAY, I ASKED THE AIR FORCE, MADE IT SOUND LIKE THE NEW DIRECTOR FINDING HIS FEET. THEY SAID THEIR MAIN CONCERN--WHEN RAYNER CONTACTED NORAD ABOUT A POSSIBLE SUPERHERO INSURGENCY--WAS ENGAGING HUMAN-SIZED TARGETS CAPABLE OF FLIGHT.
"TOO SMALL. TOO MANEUVERABLE. BUT THE ANSWER SHOWED UP STRAIGHT AWAY."

"THEIR RADAR-GUIDED MISSILES WERE ADAPTED TO HOME IN ON THE NEURONS IN THE SUPES' BRAINS. SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE INCREASED RATE AT WHICH THEY FIRE, WITH THE BRAIN CHEMISTRY PECULIAR TO COMPOUND V.

"OBVIOUSLY THAT WAS WHAT SAVED THE DAY. WITHOUT SUCH SPECIALIZED TECH, WE'D NOW BE LIVING IN A VERY DIFFERENT AMERICA--AND RAYNER'S CAREER PROSPECTS ARE GOING TO REFLECT THAT.

"ONLY SENIOR COMMAND KNEW THE DETAILS, OF COURSE. AND SHE WASN'T SAYING WHERE SHE GOT THE INTEL. BUT..."

AYE.

WHY, UH, WHY'RE YOU ASKING, JUST AS A MATTER OF INTEREST?

SEE YOU, MONKEY.

UM... WHEN AM I GOING TO GET THE, THE INFORMATION YOU MENTIONED...?

HELLO?

NNNEEEEEEEHH...!

WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?

ONE THING AT A TIME.

RIGHT, WHERE WAS I...ONCE HE SAW THE BUGS IN THE PHONE AN' THE OFFICE, VAS KNEW WHOEVER THIS WAS KNEW THE BOY'D BEEN TALKIN' TO HIM. HE DIDN'T WANNA THINK ABOUT IT BEIN' BUTCHER, ABOUT WHAT THAT'D MEAN--BUT HE HAD TO CONSIDER IT.

HE PUT EVERYTHING HE HAD ONLINE, FOR ME TO FIND IF THE WORST CAME TO THE WORST. THEN HE TRIED TO GET THIS FELLA SOMEWHERE SAFE WHILE HE WORKED OUT WHAT TO DO, ON THE THEORY THAT HE MIGHT NEED SOME SORTA STATEMENT FOR THE POLIS.

ACCORDIN' TO THE RUSSIAN NEWS SITES, VASILI VORISHIKIN--FORMER SUPERHERO OF THE SOVIET UNION--AN' ORGANIZED CRIME ASSOCIATE STEPAN GUREVICH WERE FOUND DEAD TOGETHER THREE DAYS AGO.

HE MUST'VE BEEN RIGHT BEHIND THEM.

THERE IS...A CHANCE THAT THIS IS *NOT* M'SIEU CHARCUTER...

THERE IS.

IT SOUNDS LIKE HIM, IT SOUNDS LIKE THE WAY HE WORKS, AN' IT SOUNDS LIKE THE SORTA THING HE'D WANT. BUT YEAH, THERE IS.

WHAT ABOUT THE SHIT GOT SENT TO FLORIDA?

ARRIVED TEN DAYS AGO. TAMPA PORT AUTHORITY SAID IT WAS TRUCKED OUT IN FOUR SEPARATE VEHICLES.

I DOUBT ANY O' THESE BOYS KEN WHAT THEY'VE BEEN CARRYIN'.

LET US SAY THAT IT IS HIM.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE THAT HE IS DOING?

WELL...WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO.

"MALLORY THOUGHT THAT BUTCHER MADE HIMSELF A WAR. *A SELF-SUSTAININ', NEVERENDIN' CONFLICT,* WAS WHAT HE SAID TO ME--WHERE HE CAN JUST GO ON BEATIN' THE FUCK OUTTA SUPES FOREVER, LOVIN' EVERY MINUTE OF IT.

"BUT WHAT IF MALLORY HAD THE WRONG END O' THE STICK?"

YOU SAW LE COLONEL?

LONG STORY.

BUTCHER WANTED REVENGE ON THE HOMELANDER--BLACK NOIR AS IT TURNED OUT, BUT THAT WAS PERSONAL, THAT WAS SPECIFIC. HE WANTED TO LITERALLY GET HIS HANDS ON HIM, FOR WHAT THE FUCKER DID TO HIS WIFE.

BUT THAT'S OVER AN' DONE WITH NOW. SO WHAT DOES THAT LEAVE?

EVERY OTHER SUPE ON THE FUCKIN' PLANET.

NON...!

SAID SO HIMSELF.

"REMEMBER THE PAGEANT? THE DEAD SUPE KIDS?

"WITH GREAT POWER COMES THE TOTAL FUCKIN' CERTAINTY THAT YOU'RE GONNA TURN INTO A CUNT, AN' HE BELIEVED IT. HE WAS TALKIN' 'BOUT KILLIN' EVERY MUTHAFUCKIN' ONE OF 'EM."

BREAKIN' LEGS OR A TOTAL WIPE-OUT.

WHAT SOUNDS MORE LIKE HIM?

IF HE *COULD*, HE SAID. DO WE THINK HE CAN?

THIS *HEAD-EXPLODING V:* AS I RECALL IT WAS UNSTABLE STUFF. THE SUBJECT MUST INGEST IT, IN FOOD OR BY INJECTION, AND EVEN THEN IT MUST BE DETONATED BY A SIGNAL...

AYE, WELL I'VE BEEN THINKIN' ABOUT THAT.

WHAT IF THIS STUFF'S JUST HIS STARTIN' POINT? WHAT IF HE WANTED TO TURN IT INTO SOMETHIN' ELSE, LIKE A DIRTY BOMB OR SOME SORTA GAS?

HE'S HAD A C.I.A. BLACK BUDGET TO PLAY WI' FOR YEARS, WI' THE CASH HE'S GOT HE COULD FLY THE STUFF ANYWHERE. AN' IF IT'S NO' QUITE WHAT HE NEEDS NOW...

HE COULD ADAPT IT?

BUTCHER AIN'T NO FUCKIN' BIOCHEMIST, HUGHIE.

NO, BUT I THINK HE'S GOT ONE WORKIN' FOR HIM. THAT'S WHY I CALLED MONKEY, HE SAID WHATEVER SPECIALIST KNOW-HOW THE AIR FORCE GOT HOLD OF CAME FROM HIM...

VOGELBAUM?

THE MAN COMMITTED SUICIDE...!

TURNED OUT THAT WAS BULLSHIT. MALLORY KEPT HIM ALIVE TO BREW OUR VERSION OF V, THEN HAD BUTCHER CANCEL HIS TICKET.

BUT WHAT IF THAT'S BULLSHIT TOO?

I FUCKIN' DOUBT IT. MALLORY TOLD ME BUTCHER TORE HIS THROAT OUT WITH HIS TEETH.

HE SAW IT HAPPEN?

NO, BUT...

WHAT'D HE SEE?

WELL HE WAS JUST OUTSIDE, HE...

AN' WHO THE FUCK WE TALKIN' ABOUT HERE?

IF THIS IS TRUE.

IF HE IS...WEAPONIZING V, WITH OR WITHOUT PROFESSOR VOGELBAUM.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

WELL--

TALK TO HIM, LIKE...

FIRST THING TO--

UN MOMENT.

OH.

UM... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, HEN?

D'YOU NO' WANT TO...LIKE IF WE HAVE TO GO UP AGAINST...

AW HEN, I KEN IT'S ROUGH, LIKE. BUT WE REALLY NEED YOU.

I MEAN IF IT'S WHAT WE THINK IT IS, IF HE SETS SOMETHIN' OFF OR WHATEVER, AN AWFUL LOT O' FOLK MIGHT END UP DEAD.

JUST THINK ABOUT EVERYONE'S BEEN AFFECTED BY V OVER THE YEARS, OR HAS IT IN THEIR VEINS AN' DOESN'T EVEN KNOW. YOU'VE GOTTA BE TALKIN' ***MILLIONS,*** MEN, WOMEN KIDS...

PETIT HUGHIE?

SHE HAS MADE SUCH PROGRESS LATELY. CAUSED NO PAIN, HURT NO ONE SINCE THE FIGHT WITH TEAM TITANIC. POSSIBLY, JUST POSSIBLY, SOME OF WHAT I'VE SAID HAS GOTTEN THROUGH.

PERHAPS... IN LIGHT OF WHOM WE FACE...WE ASK TOO MUCH?

SHIT.

IF ANYONE DESERVES A CHANCE TO WALK AWAY.

NO BOTHER.

WE'RE GONNA GO AN' HAVE A BURGER OR SOMETHIN', TALK ABOUT THIS BY OURSELVES.

YOU STAY HERE AN' WATCH A BIT O' TELLY, AYE?

I HATE MEAN PEOPLE.

THE FOUR OF US, THEN.

FILES ARE WIPED. DESK'S EMPTY.

NO SURPRISES THERE.

MALLORY DID THE SAME BEFORE HE LEFT, BUT I'M THINKIN' THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHIN' IN THE LANGLEY DATABASE.

LIKE IF THE AGENCY BOUGHT THE PROPERTY IN THE FIRST PLACE, OR THEY STILL PAYIN' RENT ON IT. THAT'S IF HE JUST TOOK OVER A REGULAR SAFEHOUSE.

HE SEEMED A LOT MORE CAREFUL THAN THAT, EVEN IN THE SHORT TIME I TALKED TO HIM...

HE WAS.

FILES

BUT IT'S ALL WE GOT TO GO ON RIGHT NOW. CALL YOU IF I GET LUCKY.

AYE, ALL RIGHT. I'M AT THE D.M.V. NOW, I'M GONNA BE HERE A WEE WHILE YET.

SEE YOU.

OH, BLOODY HELL.

WHY AIN'T YOU IN L.A., SORTIN' OUT YER KID?

YEAH.

WE GONNA HAVE TO HAVE A TALK ABOUT THAT.

I THOUGHT I'D PUT THE FEAR O' GOD IN HER. SHE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO TELL YOU ANYTHIN' ABOUT IT.

WE GONNA HAVE TO HAVE A TALK ABOUT THAT, TOO.

THOUGHT YOU MIGHTA BEEN GONE FOR GOOD...

WELL, THE COAST WAS MEANT TO BE CLEAR, WASN'T IT? I WIPED ALL MY STUFF; IT OCCURRED IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO NIP BACK AN' WIPE YOURS AN' ALL.

JUST IN CASE, LIKE.

AS LONG AS WE'RE FILLIN' IN THE BLANKS...WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT, SENDIN' HUGHIE TO SEE MALLORY?

OTHER WAY ROUND.

FIGURED THERE WAS SHIT HE NEEDED TO KNOW. PROB'LY BEST COMIN' STRAIGHT FROM SOURCE.

AN' I GUESS I MIGHTA BEEN THINKIN'... EVERYTHIN' YOU'D BEEN DOIN' ROUND THEN, LIKE WIT' HUGHIE AN' MALCHEMICAL, THERE MIGHTA COME A TIME WE WAS GONNA HAVE TO GET SHIT STRAIGHT.

MALLORY GOT INVOLVED AGAIN, HE MAYBE COULDA HELPED YOU SEE SENSE.

NAH, NAH, THAT WOULDNA DONE IT...!

THAT ROUNDABOUT ROUTE BOLLOCKS, ALL THEM MAYBES AN' MIGHT'VES. THAT'S NO GOOD.

YOU'VE GOTTA LEARN TO MAKE YER MIND UP.

SO...YOU REALLY DOIN' THIS, HUH?

I REALLY AM.

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I THOUGHT I WAS GONNA DIE IN THE WHITE HOUSE. TAKE A COUPLA CHUNKS OUTTA THE HOMELANDER, SO THE LADS OUTSIDE COULD FINISH HIM OFF.

BUT...NO. SO I SUPPOSE I'M GONNA HAVE TO GO THROUGH WITH IT, AIN'T I?

HUH.

WHERE YOU THINK THAT LEAVES US?

WELL, IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN STILL WALK AWAY.

--DAY OF THE CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY INTO--

AH, IF YOU CAN HEAR ME IN THE STUDIO, SHAWNA, TODAY WE'RE EXPECTED TO HEAR TESTIMONY FROM--

--NOT BUYING YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS, YOU GREEDY SONS OF BITCHES!

--TURNED OUT TO BE *JESSICA BRADLEY,* A SENIOR FIGURE IN VOUGHT'S *SUPERHUMAN DEVELOPMENT SECTION*--

--WITH THE DEATH TOLL AT OVER TWO HUNDRED AND--

YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'RE NOT ROTTING IN JAIL, YOU AND THE REST OF THOSE--

FUCK YOU!

VOUGHT SOLD

MPDC

VOUGHT AMERICAN DOUCHE

Go HOME

VOLANDER

THE DINGO

SUPERHERO

VOUGHT KILLED MY

POLICE

KEEP THEM *BACK,* GODAMMIT--

AAAH, JESUS--

No more

ROCK THE

--FEELINGS OBVIOUSLY RUNNING HIGH, MS. BRADLEY, WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE COMMITTEE'S--

AMERICAN

LIARS

?

MY WIFE DIED AT THE PENTAGON, YOU FUCKING CUNT WHORE!!

JESUS CHRIST ALMIGHTY.

MS. BRADLEY?

MS. BRADLEY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

OH--I'M FINE...REALLY, I'M FINE...

DID YOU HAVE TO COME IN PAST THAT MOB OUTSIDE? DID NO ONE INFORM YOU THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL MORE DISCRETE ENTRANCES FOR OCCASIONS LIKE THIS?

I--

THAT IS SHAMEFUL.

ABSOLUTELY SHAMEFUL, THESE THUGS ARE CLEARLY OUT FOR BLOOD.

DO YOU NEED SOME TIME TO COLLECT YOURSELF? UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I CAN EASILY HAVE OUR LEGAL TEAM ASK FOR--

NO.

NO, I'M QUITE ALL RIGHT.

WELL, THAT IS ADMIRABLE.

THAT BEING THE CASE, SHALL WE GO IN?

WHUHHH!!

AWHH--!

JESUS...

YOU KNOW...I DID HAVE ONE IDEA...

I WAS GONNA NIP UP AN' TAKE CARE O' YER MUM JUST BEFORE I GOT THE BALL ROLLIN'. MAKE SURE YOU RAN OUTTA MAGIC POTION.

TOO LATE NOW.

HOW COME YOU DIDN'T, 'CAUSE YOU LOOKIN' FOR A *FAIR FIGHT...?*

'CAUSE IT'S YER *MUM,* YOU DOZY TWAT.

FUCK YOU---!

AH, SHIT.

MUTHAFUCKA!!

WHY THE FUCK YOU GOTTA DO THIS? WHY YOU GOTTA BE THE WAY YOU ARE?!

FILES

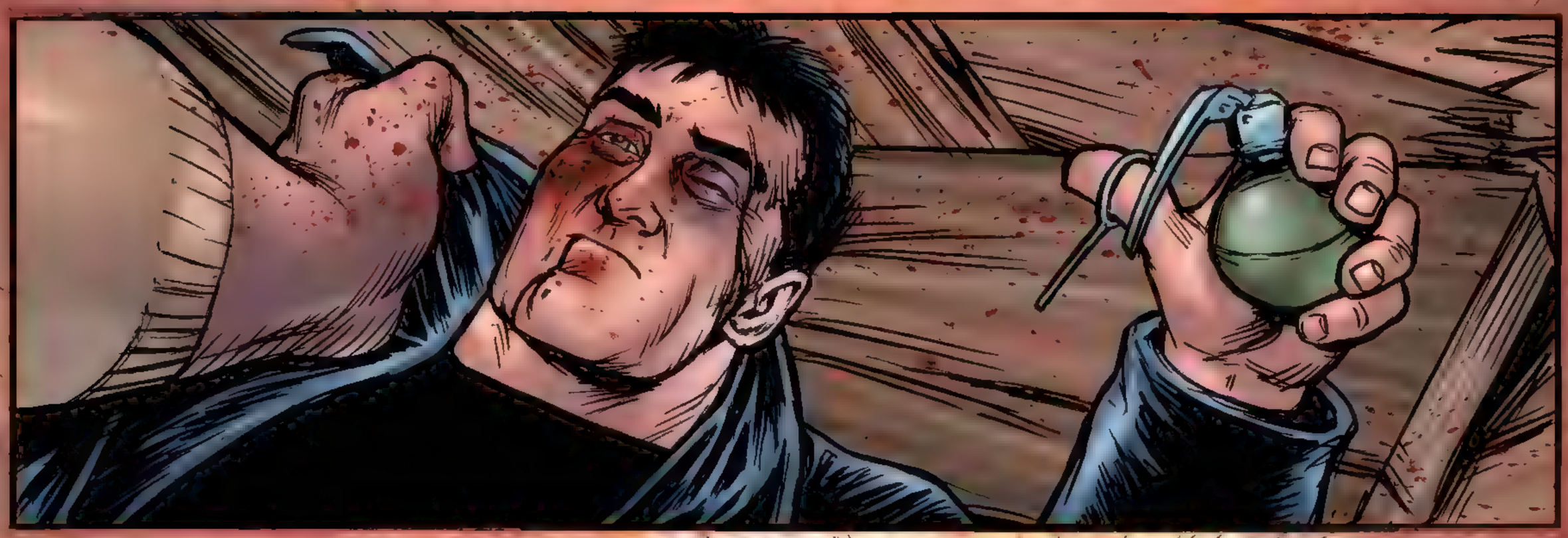
YOU THINK I FUCKIN' WANT THIS SHIT, GODAMMIT?!

I KNOW.

I KNOW.

YOU'RE THE BEST MATE A CUNT LIKE ME COULD HOPE FOR.

I DON'T DESERVE TO FUCKIN' KNOW YOU.



MMUUUUUHHH

MMUUUUUHHH

BUT I AIN'T GOT NO MATES.

MMMMHHHHHH

MMMH

next: WHOSE WOODS THESE ARE I THINK I KNOW

#69 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

DA
RI
CK
2012

Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #69

DYNAMITE ENTERTAINMENT
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ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKE

OH, GOD...

WHAT'S WRONG?

THIS. IT'S THIS.

JESUS, I'M THE FACE OF IT NOW.

YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

WILL I...?

IT'S STILL EARLY. COME BACK TO BED FOR A WHILE.

The Washington

Vought-American feels fury over "super-terrorism"

Vought exec Jess Bradley in a brush with a protestor, minutes before her testimony to congressional committee

A TRIPLE CATASTROPHE

Villanous
Occupying
Ubermen

LET ME SEE IF I CAN TAKE YOUR MIND OFF THINGS.

THE BLOODY DOORS OFF

part four

FRENCHIE, YOU--YOU'RE NO'--

I AM AFRAID SO, MON BRAVE.

AW, NO.

AW, JESUS.

THAT'S IT, THEN. IT'S HIM. IT'S HIM AN' HE'S DOIN' IT.

WE CAN'T KEEP THIS TO OURSELVES NOW, WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO HAND OVER TO RAYNER, OR MONKEY--

PETIT HUGHIE, THAT IS NOT A GOOD IDEA.

EVEN NOW WE MUST THINK CLEARLY. THE BOYS ARE MEANT TO BE DENIABLE.

IF M'SIEU CHARCUTER *HAS* TRULY LEFT THE RAILS, AND MADAM RAYNER GETS TO HEAR ABOUT IT, SHE WILL PANIC. HER SENATE RUN BEGINS THIS YEAR, N'EST-CE PAS?

ONE CALL FROM HER AND WE ARE FUGITIVES FROM JUSTICE. DANGEROUS CRIMINALS. EVERY SWAT TEAM IN AMERICA WILL BE TOLD TO SHOOT ON SIGHT.

WE CAN EVADE OR FIGHT, BUT NOT WHILE HUNTING M'SIEU CHARCUTER. AND THE NOTION OF SUCH IGNORANT AMATEURS FINDING **HIM**, WITH TACTICS FROM THE FILMS OF M'SIEU BAY...

AW SHITE, IT'S US.

IT'S FUCKIN' GOT TO BE US.

YOU'RE RIGHT, YOU KNOW, I HADN'T THOUGHT OF **ANY** O' THAT...

YOUR OLD CHUM FRENCHIE LISTENS MORE THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.

AYE.

I'M SORRY I'M NO' THERE, FRENCHIE. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, ARE YOU?

I HAVE BEEN WORSE. RARELY, BUT I HAVE BEEN WORSE.

LES GENDARMES WERE TROUBLESOME AT FIRST. IT SEEMS OUR CLEARANCE WAS CANCELED RECENTLY, THEN REINSTATED.

MONKEY...

OUI. ALL IS IN ORDER NOW.

EXCEPT THAT IT WILL NEVER BE AGAIN.

NO.

PETIT HUGHIE... YOU KNOW THAT HE WOULD WANT US NEITHER TO FLAG NOR FAIL, YES?

LE GRAND HOMME. HE WOULD BE MOST DISPLEASED.

I--I JUST--

OH, I KEN THAT, FRENCHIE.

TAKE HEART.

WHERE ARE YOU AND WHAT HAVE YOU DISCOVERED?

I'M...WELL, I'VE...I'M ACTUALLY UP IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT. I'M IN THE MIDDLE O' THE GREEN MOUNTAINS, I DROVE ALL BLOODY NIGHT.

POURQUOI?

WELL.

FIRST OF ALL, THE D.M.V. WAS A DEAD LOSS. I GOT NUMBERS FOR A COUPLA THE TRUCKERS, BUT ALL THEY SAID WAS THEY DROVE THE STUFF FROM TAMPA TO WEE AIRFIELDS DOTTED AROUND THE COUNTRY. NEAR DALLAS, L.A., PORTLAND AN' BOSTON.

SWEETIE?

SWEETIE, ARE YOU OKAY?

DO YOU WANT ME TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO...?

NO RECIPIENTS, THEY JUST UNHOOKED THE CONTAINERS AN' DROVE OFF, LIKE THEY'D--

UN MOMENT.

MA'AMSELLE? NON.

PARDON, MAIS C'EST TRES DANGEREUX.

EH?

NO RECIPIENTS. PAYMENT?

WIRED TO EACH GUY'S LOCAL WESTERN UNION. THAT WAS WHERE IT STARTED GETTIN' TRICKY, TWO O' THEM ASKED ME IF THEY'D BE NEEDIN' LAWYERS...

THERE WILL BE NO POINT VISITING THOSE AIRFIELDS, OF COURSE. THE MATERIEL WILL BE LONG GONE.

ONE THING I DID THINK OF: IF HE IS USIN' AGENCY PILOTS...

I WILL LOOK INTO THAT.

SO WHY NEW HAMPSHIRE?

"OH, WELL, ONCE I HIT A WALL WI' THE SHIPMENT O' V, I STARTED THINKIN' ABOUT VOGELBAUM AGAIN.

"M.M. AN' I WERE, WE, WE WERE SAYIN' IT WASN'T TOO LIKELY MALLORY'D'VE USED A PROPER AGENCY SAFEHOUSE. HE WAS TRYNNA KEEP A LOT O' THAT STUFF FROM HIS BOSS AT THE TIME.

"BUT THEN I REMEMBERED HIM TELLIN' ME HIS FAMILY WAS RICH..."

AN' I THOUGHT HANG ON, WHAT IF THE ARROGANT PRICK JUST BOUGHT A PLACE HIMSELF, OR USED ONE HE ALREADY OWNED...

AND LE COLONEL ATTENDED DARTMOUTH... WHICH IS IN...

I THOUGHT IT WAS WORTH A GO, AT LEAST.

I DID A WEE SEARCH. EITHER THE MALLORYS ARE FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE OR JUST BLOODY CLOSE TO IT, THEY OWN PROPERTY ALL OVER THE STATE. THEN I REMEMBERED MALLORY THOUGHT VOGELBAUM DIED ABOUT TWELVE YEARS AGO.

I WENT BACK A BIT. THERE'S A HIGHLY DESIRABLE WEE PLACE WENT ON THE MARKET AROUND ABOUT THAT TIME, SOLD BY G.D. MALLORY TO A PRIVATE BUYER...

VERY PRIVATE, I AM SURE.

IF THE OLD MAN LIVES, RETURN WITH HIM AT ONCE. AND PETIT HUGHIE?

AYE?

BE CAREFUL.

"AYE, FRENCHIE... THERE'S ONE OTHER THING I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT."

"OUI?"

"I'VE, UH, I'VE NO' BEEN ABLE TO STOP THINKIN' ABOUT IT SINCE ALL THIS STARTED. MAYBE EVEN BACK BEFORE THAT."

"SO...?"

"IF...IF IT REALLY CAME TO IT. LIKE IF THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY. WOULD WE BE ABLE TO... LIKE...*HANDLE* BUTCHER?"

"HMMM. MOI--POSSIBLY. IF THE PLANETS WERE ALIGNED CORRECTLY. LA FEMME--OUI, ASSUMING THE ENCOUNTER STARTED FACE TO FACE."

"AND...?"

"YOU?"

"HE WOULD REMOVE YOUR ARMS AND LEGS AND RE-INSERT THEM IN THE WRONG SOCKETS."

WAAH!

Butcher
mobile

HUH

HEL

YOU EVER BEEN HIT IN THE FACE, HUGHIE?

WELL, UH... ONE O' THE G-WIZ FELLAS PUNCHED ME, THAT WAS PRETTY--

NAH, HE WAS A CUNT. I MEAN REALLY FUCKIN' HIT, LIKE **WALLOP** AN' YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT IT.

GETS YER ATTENTION, I CAN TELL YOU. LETS YOU KNOW WHERE YOU STAND. YOU LOOK THE OTHER BLOKE IN THE EYE AN' FUCK ME, THE TWO O' YOU ALMOST RESPECT EACH OTHER...

WH... WHAT...?

GOOD, HARD, SMACK IN THE MOUTH. YOU EVER HAD THAT?

'COURSE, SOMEONE LIKE YOU, I THINK IT MIGHT JUST MAKE YOU MORE NERVOUS.

HAVE YOU FLINCHIN' TWICE AS MUCH, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

LISTEN, WHY'RE YOU *DOIN' THIS...?*

GOTTA FINISH THE JOB, HUGHIE.

BUT AFTER ALL THIS TIME, ALL OF US TOGETHER--I MEAN *M.M.*, FOR GOD'S SAKE...!

HE TRIED TO STOP ME.

HOW'S VOGELBAUM LOOK?

HE... WELL, HE...

UM... NO' TEN YEARS DEAD, ANYWAY, I SUPPOSE.

NOT A HUNDRED AN' THIRTEEN, NEITHER. AMAZIN' WHAT A FEW SHOTS O' V CAN DO FOR A BLOKE.

WHAT'D MALLORY TELL YOU HAPPENED TO HIM, JUST AS A MATTER OF INTEREST?

HE, HE SAID YOU BIT HIS THROAT OUT. HE SAW YOU COME OUT THE HOUSE AN' SPIT A LUMP O' MEAT IN THE DRIVEWAY.

HA HA HA HA, IT WAS FUCKIN' RASPBERRY JAM...!

I HAD THE IDEA ON THE WAY THERE, I THOUGHT--HANG ABOUT, THE WORLD EXPERT ON COMPOUND V, THE MAN WHO FUCKIN' INVENTED IT, AN' WE'RE JUST GONNA DO HIM IN? I MEAN I DUNNO, THAT MIGHTA BEEN WHEN I FIRST TWIGGED MALLORY'S HEART WEREN'T IN IT A HUNDRED PERCENT.

SO I WENT IN AN' FOUND THE POOR OL' CUNT AN' HE NEARLY HAD A HEART ATTACK THERE AN' THEN. I SAID ALL RIGHT, MATE, YOU JUST KEEP SCHTUM AN' WE'LL SEE IF WE CAN MAKE THIS LOOK CONVINCIN'.

I FOUND THE JAM IN THE FRIDGE.

BIT HIS THROAT OUT, FOR FUCK'S SAKE...!

BUT THAT WAS THE THING WITH MALLORY. THAT FUCKIN' TINKER-TAILOR-SOLDIER WORLD OF HIS, YOU COULD GET HIM BELIEVIN' ANYTHING IF YOU GOT IT LOOKIN' SINISTER ENOUGH.

WHAT'D YOU TELL VOGELBAUM...?

YOU'RE FADIN' OUT A BIT, MATE. YOU DOWN IN THE LAB?

YOU AIN'T GONNA FIND NOTHIN' USEFUL THERE, I TOOK ALL HIS NOTES AN' THAT WHEN I LEFT.

WHAT'D I TELL HIM...I SAID LOOK, GRANDAD, I'LL MAKE YOU THE SAME DEAL MALLORY DID. YOU CAN HAVE THE HOUSE, YOU CAN DO YER EXPERIMENTS, AS FAR AS THE WORLD'S CONCERNED YOU'LL BE DEAD.

BUT NOW YOU'LL BE WORKIN' FOR ME, WON'T YOU? WHICH MEANS YOU CAN GET TO WORK ON A WAY TO SORT OUT THE SUPES...

AYE, YOU'VE IT ALL WORKED OUT, DON'T YOU?

WELL, I'VE BEEN THINKIN' ABOUT IT FOR QUITE A WHILE. STASHED AWAY ALL THE BITS AN' PIECES I THOUGHT I MIGHT NEED.

LIKE FUCKIN' D.U. WARHEADS FOR AN R.P.G.-7?

LISTEN TO YOU WITH ALL THE TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW!

YEAH, THINGS LIKE THAT. AN' LISTEN, I DUNNO HOW FAR ALONG YOU ARE WITH THIS, BUT I DIDN'T USE C.I.A. PILOTS TO FLY THE STUFF EVERYWHERE.

I MEAN I USED COMPANY MONEY, YEAH, BUT I HIRED PRIVATE PILOTS--SORT O' BLOKES KNOW NOT TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUNNY BIG CRATES THEY HAVE TO DROP OFF. SO YOU AIN'T GOT A HOPE O' TRACIN' THEM BEFORE THE BIG DAY.

I KNOW YOU'RE GONNA TELL ME THE REST OF IT...

I.E.D.S, HIDDEN ALL OVER THE WORLD. CHAIN DETONATION, SUPPOSED TO...HANG ON, I GOT HIM TO WRITE IT DOWN FOR ME.

FORTY PERCENT ATMOSPHERIC COVERAGE INSIDE THE FIRST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. WIND, CURRENTS AN' THE FOOD CHAIN'RE MEANT TO TAKE CARE O' THE REST.

COMPLETELY EFFECTIVE IN... SIX OR SEVEN MONTHS.

EVERYONE BLOODY DIES.

EVERY SUPE DIES.

EVERY HUMAN BEIN', EVERY LIVIN' THING WI' EVEN A HINT O' V IN THEIR SYSTEMS. EVERYONE. WEE KIDS. US.

FOR FUCK'S SAKE, YOU'RE OUTTA YER MIND! YOU'RE MAKIN' YERSELF INTO A MONSTER! YOU'RE MAD!

I'M DOIN' WHAT HAS TO BE DONE, HUGHIE.

THEY'RE A STAIN ON THE WORLD. A FUCKIN' CANCER.

NO THEY'RE NO', THEY'RE JUST *WANKERS...!*

LOOK, I KNOW THEY WENT A BIT OUTTA CONTROL, BUT--

A BIT **WHAT?** HAVE YOU BEEN PAYIN' ATTENTION FOR THE LAST TWO BLEEDIN' YEARS?

OH, JESUS. WHY DID YOU BRING ME INTO THIS, IF ALL YOU WERE GONNA DO ALL ALONG WAS...?

IT'S FUCKIN' EVIL BEYOND DESCRIPTION. IT'S ***DESPICABLE.*** IT'S LIKE THE NAZIS KILLIN' THE JEWS OR WHATEVER, JUST WIPIN' EVERYBODY OUT...!

MORE LIKE THE JEWS KILLIN' THE NAZIS, IF YOU STOP AN' THINK ABOUT IT.

THE JEWS WOULDN'T'VE KILLED LOADS AN' LOADS OF INNOCENT FOLK WHILE THEY WERE AT IT...!

WOULDN'T THEY?

THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH GETTIN' RID O' THE REAL CUNTS, MATE. YOU'VE GOTTA BURN 'EM OUT.

HEH. YOU REALLY ARE FUCKIN' HOPELESS, AIN'T YOU, HUGHIE?

ALL THAT INSIDER GEN MALLORY GAVE YOU, EVERYTHING ELSE YOU'VE LEARNED IN THIS BLOODY JOB, AN' YOU CAN'T DO FUCK ALL WITH IT. IT'S LIKE IT'S SHIT IN YOUR HANDS.

WHEN SOMEONE GIVES YOU A WEAPON, SON: YOU USE IT.

I DUNNO.

ALL RIGHT, TRY THIS ONE ON FOR SIZE. HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE THERE?

EH?

I'M STANDIN' HERE TALKIN' TO YOU...I'M...

NO, HUGHIE.

HOW DO I KNOW.

YOU'RE THERE.

...ET LES TACOS DE POULET POUR LA FEMME. MM? AH...SURPRISE ME.

ALL YOU ARE GOOD FOR? QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST?

OUI. MM. OUI, OUI. MM-HMM.

DID YOU *LITERALLY* PISS YOURSELF?

WELL, THEN YOU ARE NOT COMPLETELY COWARDLY. AND AS FOR USELESS--THE MAN WAS DEAD, HIS NOTES WERE GONE. THAT HE CAN TELL US NOTHING IS NOT YOUR FAULT; YOU HAD THE THOUGHT TOO LATE, BUT NOTHING OF THE KIND OCCURRED TO ME AT ALL.

GARCON ETRANGE.

HMH.

SO.

VAS AND HIS R.O.C. CONNECTION: MORT.

SHIPMENTS TO THE U.S.A: COMPLETE.

DRIVERS TO AIRFIELDS: UNAWARE.

AIRCREW: CANNOT BE FOUND.

VOGELBAUM: MORT.

LA LEGENDE, VOTRE NUMBER ONE SOURCE: MORT.

LAIT DE LA MERE, LE GRAND DETECTIVE: MORT.

LE SINGE: WILL PANIC IN AN INSTANT.

DID I HELP?

OST SECRET

USERNAME:

PASSWORD:

CONFIRM:

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

LET ME HELP, I SAID, AND SMILED AND GESTURED.

I HELPED YOU BE A PART OF WHAT WE WERE.

BUT DID I HELP?

SHIT.

MIND YER HEAD, MY SON.

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

JE T'AIME.

FROM THE FIRST.

WHY DID YOU BRING ME INTO THIS

IF ALL YOU WERE GONNA DO ALL ALONG WAS

...'CAUSE YOU'RE GOOD AT IT.

YOU LIKE IT.

YOU'VE GOT A SCORE TO SETTLE, SO YOU WANT IT.

ALL THAT, AN' I ALWAYS WANTED A LITTLE BROTHER.

EVERYTHING HE DOES OR SAYS SERVES WHATEVER IT IS HE GOT PLANNED. HE DON'T WASTE NOTHIN'--NOT TIME, NOT WORDS, NOT EFFORT.

NOT EVEN A GODDAMN SMILE, HUGHIE.

HUGHIE... ARE YOU SCARED O' ME?

I TALK TO YOU LIKE YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER ONE O' THESE NUTTERS, WHEN THAT'S THE LAST BLEEDIN' THING YOU ARE. YOU'RE AN ORDINARY BLOKE.

FUCKIN' DECENT ONE, INTO THE BARGAIN.

YOU'RE ME MATE.

HOW MANY BLEEDIN' TALKS'VE WE HAD THAT START WITH YOU THINKIN' ABOUT THE WAY THINGS ARE? YOU CAN'T HANDLE THIS, YOU DON'T LIKE THAT, YOU NEED MORE FUCKIN' TIME OFF.

IS THERE ANY CHANCE AT ALL O' YOU FINALLY TWIGGIN' WHAT WE DO HERE AN' SORTIN' YERSELF OUT? AN' ONCE AN' FOR FUCKIN' ALL, *MAKIN' YER MIND UP...?*

ALL I'VE BEEN DOIN'S TRYNNA TOUGHEN YOU UP, MATE. I JUST CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT O' YOU GETTIN' HURT.

'COS THIS FUCKIN' WORLD'LL EAT YOU ALIVE IF YOU LET IT.

ONE BROTHER, DIED IN AN ACCIDENT AGED NINETEEN. MOTHER DIED RECENTLY. FATHER STILL ALIVE.

WAS HIS BROTHER YOUNGER OR OLDER...?

BORN TWO YEARS AFTER HE WAS.

THOSE ARE THE DETAILS I WAS ABLE TO GLEAN BEFORE MEETING HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME. AS WELL AS THE AUTOPSY ON HIS WIFE, WHICH I READ CAREFULLY AND WHICH LEFT ME THOROUGHLY APPALLED.

IT'S WORTH NOTING THAT THERE'S NO RECORD OF THE ASSAULTS HE COMMITTED CONTINUING AFTER HE LEFT THE MILITARY. WHICH EITHER MEANS HE WAS VERY LUCKY, OR...

I CAN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN, BUT I SUSPECT REBECCA BUTCHER WAS A SPECIAL WOMAN. IT'S POSSIBLE THAT HER DEATH WAS ONE OF TWO TRAGEDIES.

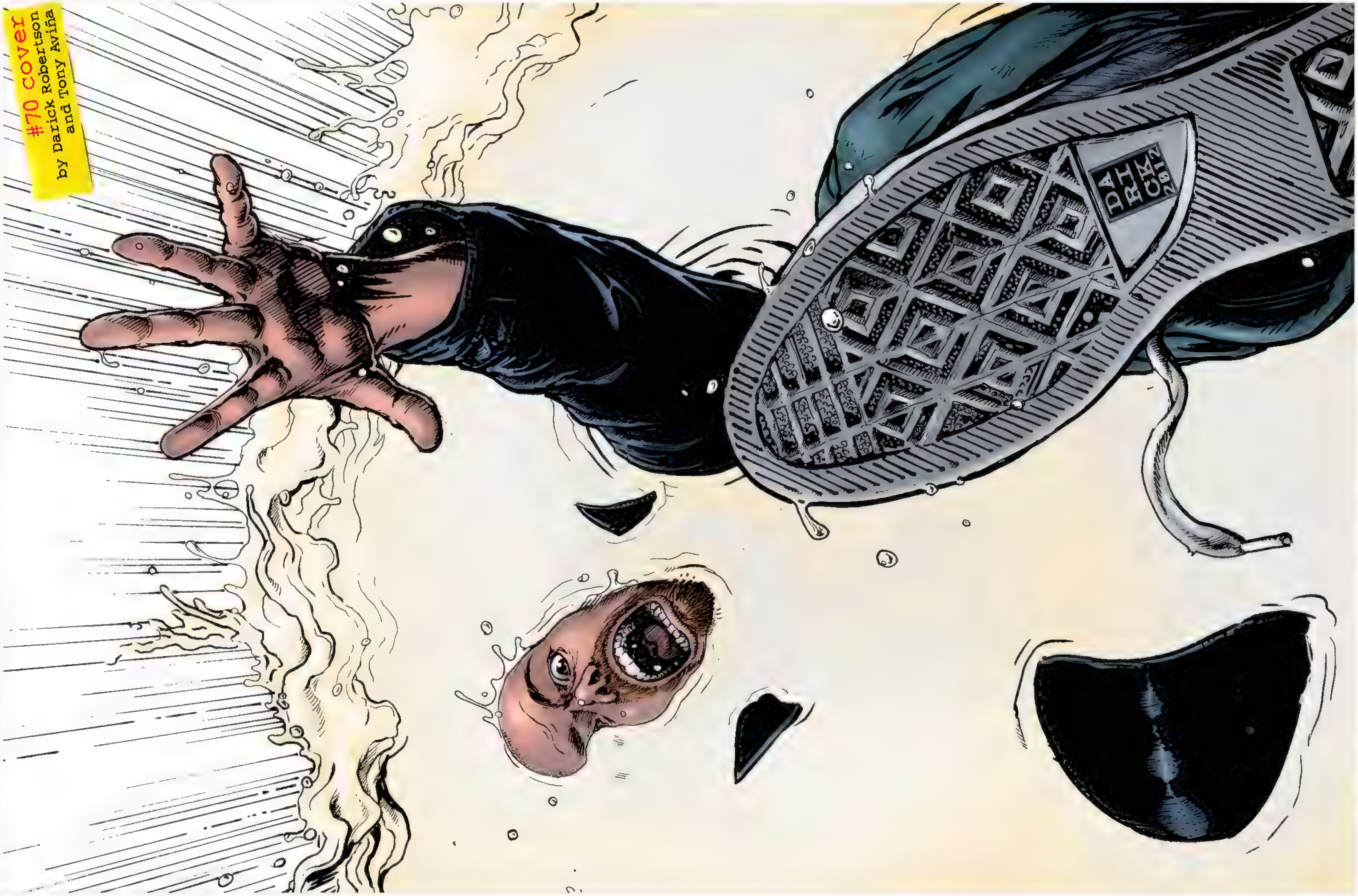
YOU REALLY ARE FUCKIN' HOPELESS, AIN'T YOU, HUGHIE?

OH MY FUCKIN' GOD ALMIGHTY.

I'M SUPPOSED TO STOP YOU.

next: THE NAME OF THE GAME

#70 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña



Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #70

DYNAMITE

BOOK
ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FOR FULL BLEED AND REGULAR COMIC
ISSUE
PAGE
ARTIST

DA RI CK 2012

◀ CUT RIGHT HAND

◀ CUT RIGHT HAND PAGE AT THIS LINE

FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN, ABUT PAGE EDGES, TAPE ON BACK. **DO NO**
ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKE

...SO D'YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYIN'? D'YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYIN', AYE?

IT'S LIKE, LIKE, LIKE EVERYTHIN' GETS TAKEN AWAY FROM ME, ***EVERYTHIN'***, I MEAN EVEN MY TRIP HOME WASN'T... WASN'T...IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FOR ***ME***, SO I COULD SORT OUT WHAT WAS GOIN' ON IN MY HEAD, BUT IT ENDED UP BEIN' ABOUT BOBBY AN' DET AN' ANNIE...

AN' IN THE MEANTIME, LIKE, WHILE I'M SITTIN' AROUND AGONIZIN' ABOUT STUFF LIKE THIS, THE BUTCHERS AN' MALLORYS AN' VOUGHT-AMERICANS O' THE WORLD JUST ***GET ON WI' IT...!***

THE BLOODY DOORS OFF

part five

I MEAN THEY DO, DON'T THEY? THEY REALLY DO...
SURE.
YOU'RE NO' JUST SAYIN' THAT, I MEAN YOU DO KEN WHAT I'M ON ABOUT, AYE?
F.D.N.Y
AMBULAN
EMS
YOU BET.
LISTEN, CAN YOU SAY YOUR NAME FOR ME? YOUR NAME?
IT'S HUGHIE, AYE. WEE HUGHIE.
YOUR FULL NAME?
HUGH CAMPBELL.
OKAY, HOW ABOUT THE DATE? CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT--
WHOA.
IS THIS...?
ONE FOR THE P.D..

LISTEN, THE GUY'S STILL IN SHOCK--

I DON'T CARE. GIVE IT BACK TO HIM.

SERIOUSLY, HE'S GOT A CONCUSSION...

GIVE IT BACK.

THERE YOU GO, SIR. THESE GUYS ARE ALL DONE.

AYE?

ANYTHING YOU NEED, ANYTHING WE CAN DO, DON'T HESITATE. OKAY?

ALL RIGHT FOR YOU, PAL.

HE'S GONNA TEAR MY ARMS AN' LEGS OFF AN' PUT THEM BACK IN THE WRONG SOCKETS.

ALL. RIGHT. FOR. YOU.

AW, SORT YERSELF OUT, YOU DOSS CUNT!

HULLO?

HULLO...?

MAH BOOYYYY

HULLO THERE?

MAH BOOYYYYYY

UM...I...

I'M A FRIEND O' YER SON'S, MRS...

MRS. MILK?

IS THERE ANYONE ACTUALLY DOWN HERE...?

WHUH--!

?

MAH BOOYYYYYY

MAH BOOYYYYYY

NUH

YUH

AW, NOOOO...!

MAH BOOYYYYYY

OH JESUS--

NEVER TALK ABOUT THIS--

NEVER TELL ANYONE--

EVER--

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN TAKING THOSE?

YESTERDAY WAS BRUTAL.

MM.

I THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME TO REVIEW AND REFLECT, IF ONLY TO PREVENT TODAY FROM BEING AS DIFFICULT.

SURE.

IT'S NOT GOING TO BE ENOUGH, IS IT?

THEY'VE BEEN HAMMERING AWAY AT US FOR TWO DAYS AND THEY'VE GOTTEN ABSOLUTELY NOWHERE. WE'VE STUCK TO OUR LINE. GIVEN NOTHING AWAY.

AND IT'S NOT GOING TO BE ENOUGH BECAUSE THEY WANT SOMEONE TO *SWING* FOR THIS...

GO ON.

AT THE START YOU SAID WE'D GONE TOO FAR. WE'D PUSHED PEOPLE BEYOND THE NOTION OF THE WORLD WORKING AS THEY SUSPECTED IT DID, OF WHAT EVEN THE MOST CYNICAL AND APATHETIC WOULD BE PREPARED TO LIVE WITH.

AND YOU WERE RIGHT, AND THAT'S WHAT'S GOING TO KILL US.

BECAUSE NO MATTER HOW MUCH DAMAGE CONTROL WE DO, OR HOW FAR DOWN IN THE DARK WE KEEP THE DAKOTA BOB PLAN: ***WE'VE GONE TOO FAR.***

HUNDREDS DEAD, INCLUDING A PRESIDENT. A BATTLE IN THE SKY, AN EXECUTION ON THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN. THE SUPES TURNING OUT TO BE RABID DEMONS, NOT MESSIAHS IN PRETTY COSTUMES.

IT'S ALL TOO MUCH, IT'S ALL GOING TO COME TUMBLING DOWN ON US, LIKE THE ROCKS THEY THROW AT A PUBLIC STONING...

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

WE--

MAKE A DEAL.

NO.

WAIT, LISTEN TO ME, WITH WHAT WE KNOW WE--

NO.

WE COULD GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT, A MONSTER, A VILLAIN, SOMETHING TO PUBLICLY--

NO.

JESSICA, WE CAN'T BETRAY OUR CORPORATION.

COMPANY LOYALTY. THE PRINCIPLE THAT STANDS BEFORE AND ABOVE ALL OTHERS.

VOUGHT-AMERICAN IS THE AIR THAT WE BREATHE. IT GIVES US LIFE. IT'S BIGGER THAN EITHER OF US, SEPARATELY OR TOGETHER; BIGGER THAN BREWSTER AND THE COTERIE OF LITTLE PEOPLE TRYING TO DESTROY US TO PROTECT IT.

IT GIVES OUR LIVES MEANING, AND IF YOU THINK THIS IS MERE HYPERBOLE, HAVE YOU EVER TRIED IMAGINING LIFE WITHOUT IT?

WE'VE GIVEN OUR TESTIMONY. THEY HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SHAKE US, THEY KNOW NO MORE THAN WHAT WE'VE DECIDED THEY SHOULD. LEGALLY, THEY CANNOT TOUCH US.

TAKE MY HAND. TAKE HEART.

IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY.

MISTER POTAMUS?

FUCK!

RIDE OF

BAGHDAD

WHAT'RE YOU--?

I--SHIT-- I JUST--

OH MY GOD, *YOU'RE* THE DOOR-WANKER...!

AIN'T MY FAULT, MAN! AIN'T MY FUCKIN' FAULT, THE DUDE PAID ME!

WHO PAID YOU?

THE DUDE, MAN!

BIG BRITISH DUDE, HE CAME TO ME TWO YEARS AGO! HE SAID HE DIDN'T WANT YOU LIVIN' HERE, HE PAID ME TO JERK OFF UNDER YOUR DOOR EVERY NIGHT SO YOU'D WANNA MOVE OUT!

HE SAID THE PLACE IS A FUCKIN' SHITHOLE, HE WANTED YOU LIVIN' SOMEWHERE BETTER...!

HE...HE...

WAIT A MINUTE, HE SAID YOUR PLACE WAS A SHITHOLE, BUT YOU'RE HAPPY TO WANK OFF UNDER MY DOOR FOR HIM...?

HE PAID ME.

AN'...YOU WERE TRYNNA DRIVE ME OUT, BUT YOU STILL DIDN'T MIND FEEDIN' MY HAMSTER FOR ME WHEN I WAS AWAY?

YOU PAID ME.

BUT...

HHHH.

RIGHT, THEN.

GOTTA GO.

MISTER POTAMUS, WHY IS THERE BLOOD IN IT?

AIN'T THERE S'POSED TO BE?

I CAN'T STOP HIM, JAMIE.

I MEAN IT'S PURE HIM, ISN'T IT?

PAYIN' SOME FUCKIN' HEAD-THE-BALL TO DO WHATEVER, THEN JUST WALKIN' AWAY. LETTIN' THE CHAOS DESCEND ON FOLK.

I CAN SEE HIS FACE, I CAN HEAR HIM LAUGHIN', IT'S ONE O' THOSE THINGS HE ALMOST DOES JUST 'CAUSE IT'S *FUNNY*--AN' IF I HAD MOVED OUT, SO MUCH THE BETTER...

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW STRONG I MAKE MYSELF, HE'S GONNA BE AHEAD O' ME EVERY STEP O' THE WAY.

I'LL ALWAYS BE RUNNIN' TO CATCH UP. I JUST DON'T KEN HOW TO BE THAT... RANDOM.

BECAUSE THE DIFFERENCE IS HE ENJOYS IT, DOESN'T HE?

DOESN'T HE, JAMIE?

EH?

I'LL HAVE TO PHONE MONKEY. TURN IT OVER TO HIM. THERE'S NO WAY I CAN DO THIS WITHOUT M.M. AN' FRENCHIE AN' HER.

AN' IF THEY DO END UP KILLIN' ME, FUCK IT. MAYBE I CAN JUST ABOUT BE THAT BRAVE.

CAMPBELL?

HULLO THERE, MONKEY. LISTEN, I'VE GOT GOOD NEWS AN' BAD NEWS: THE GOOD NEWS IS YOU'VE GOT A CHANCE TO SAVE THE--

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT'S GOING ON?

LISTEN, WHAT IN GOD'S NAME HAPPENED AT THE FLATIRON LAST NIGHT? AND WHAT'S BUTCHER DOING AT THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING?

SAY THAT AGAIN...?

THE FLATIRON BUILDING, YOUR OFFICE, DON'T YOU EVEN KNOW--

NO' THAT. THE OTHER THING. WHAT WAS THAT YOU SAID?

HHHH...WHENEVER YOU PEOPLE SHOW YOUR IDENTIFICATION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, A BRIEF REPORT GOES INTO THE SYSTEM, WHERE, WHEN, EXPLANATION GIVEN--IF ANY.

BUTCHER ENTERED THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING TWENTY MINUTES AGO AND ORDERED IT EVACUATED. ALL FLOORS, EVERYONE PRESENT, HE CITED A POSSIBLE TERRORIST ATTACK.

ARE THE SUPES TRYING AGAIN, OR SOMETHING? DID THEY HIT YOU FIRST?

CAMPBELL?

SOMETIMES IT IS.

SOMETIMES LIFE'S AS BIG AN' MAD AN' FUCKIN' WIDESCREEN AS IT DESERVES TO BE.

CAMPBELL, ARE YOU STILL THERE, YOU--

...SOME FEDERAL THING, WE HOPPED TO IT. BUT IF THIS IS CONNECTED TO WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT, I'D LIKE--

WE APPRECIATE ALL YOUR HELP, CAPTAIN. OUR PEOPLE CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE.

OKAY, BECAUSE THE GUY--THE ORDERS GIVEN WERE TO EVACUATE AS A PRECAUTION. I DIDN'T GET ANY CRITICAL SENSE OF URGENCY.

PLEASE JUST CARRY ON WORKING WITH US AS YOU'VE BEEN DOING. KEEP EVERYONE OUT OF THE BUILDING 'TIL YOU HEAR FROM ME.

EXIT

86th Floor

ALL RIGHT?

AYE.

I KEN HOW MUCH YOU LOVE THE PLACE, SO I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT ONE LAST LOOK BEFORE BLOWIN' IT ALL TO FUCK.

IT'S LIKE SOME STUPID BLOODY MOVIE. SMASH DOWN ALL THE BEAUTIFUL BUILDIN'S 'CAUSE YOU LIKE THE WAY THEY LOOK WHEN THEY FALL.

I MEAN HAS THIS CITY NO' SUFFERED ENOUGH...?

NAH, AIN'T NONE O' THE SPECIAL SURPRISE PACKAGES SET UP LOCALLY, HUGHIE. I'M JUST UP HERE TO GET LINE O' SIGHT FOR THE SIGNAL.

THAT AN' THE VIEW, O' COURSE.

AW, GREAT, SO ALL THE AVERAGE NEW YORKER'S GOTTA WORRY ABOUT'S HIS FUCKIN' HEAD EXPLODIN'. IF HE'S ONE O' THE UNLUCKY WHO-KNOWS-WHAT PERCENT.

AN' I'M MEANT TO STOP YOU, IS THAT IT? WOULD YOU MIND TELLIN' ME HOW IN THE NAME O' GOD YOU CAME UP WI' THAT?

DUNNO EXACTLY.

I'D BEEN THINKIN' ABOUT DOIN' THIS FOR AGES. HAD HALF AN IDEA SOMEONE OUGHTA HAVE A CHANCE AT STICKIN' A SPANNER IN THE WORKS.

I MEAN IT AIN'T THE SORTA THING YOU DO LIGHTLY, WIPIN' OUT A GOOD CHUNK O' THE HUMAN RACE...

THAT'S INSANE.

YEAH, I KNOW.

I'VE ALREADY GOT THAT FEELIN' I GET, SOMETIMES. WHENEVER I REALLY FUCKIN' GO FOR IT.

WHICH IS...?

LIKE I'M SOMEWHERE ELSE WATCHIN' IT HAPPEN.

OH, WELL THAT'S PURE DEAD BRILLIANT, THAT IS. I'LL HAVE TO TELL THE SECURITY FELLA AT THE FLATIRON THAT, IF THEY EVER MANAGE TO DIG HIM OUT. AN' THE BOY WAS DRIVIN' PAST GOT BLINDED, AN' THE LASSIE LOST BOTH LEGS.

THERE YOU GO. EVEN AT FIVE A.M. THERE'S COLLATERAL.

YEAH, I KNOW. BUT IT HAD TO BE DONE.

WHY. 'CAUSE SOMEBODY HAD SOME BIG BLOODY PLAN?

BUT I GET THE IDEA. I REALLY DO.

THE CITY'S LEGO AN' PEOPLE ARE TOYS: YOU SOUND LIKE A FUCKIN' *SUPERVILLAIN*...

AH, NOW YOU'RE FIGHTIN' DIRTY, HUGHIE.

GOOD FOR YOU.

I--

YOU'RE STILL SCARED O' ME, AIN'T YOU?

EH--?

'COURSE YOU ARE.

YOU NEVER COULD LOOK ME IN THE EYE FOR ALL THAT LONG. STILL CAN'T.

CAN YOU EVEN SAY ME NAME?

YEAH, THERE YOU ARE.

HMH.

RRAAAAAAAHHH!!

HUGHIE, DON'T BE A CUNT--!

RRAAHH!!!

RRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH

FUCK!

AAAAAAAHH!!

FUCK! FUCK, HUGHIE, THAT'S ME BAD HAND!

OH JESUS! DON'T LET GO! OH GOD!

GRAB ON, FOR FUCK'S SAKE!

AAAAAH, NOT ME HAND, YOU TWAT, ME ARM!

SORRY--!

HA HA HA HA HA, JESUS FUCKIN' CHRIST...!

SORRY! I'M SORRY! SORRY!

WH-WH-WH-WH-WHAT'RE YOU LAUGHIN' FOR--?

AFTER EVERYTHIN'S HAPPENED--

YOU'RE SAYIN' SORRY TO ME.

next: THE SCORES ON THE DOORS

#71 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #71

AAAAAAAAHHH! GOD, GOD, JESUS CHRIST! AAAAAAH!!

YOU THINK THAT'S BAD--

I CAN'T FEEL FUCK ALL BELOW ME NECK.

THE BLOODY DOORS OFF

conclusion

THERE YOU GO.

WHUHHH!!

AAAAH!

AAH-AAH-AAH-AAH-AAH-AAAAH!

SNAP THE BAR, YOU TIT.

AW FUCK, HELP ME, GET ME DOWN...!

WH-WH-WH--?

THAT'S WHAT'S HOLDIN' YOU UP THERE. SNAP IT.

BUT IT *REALLY HURTS*...!

IT'S GONNA HURT A FUCKSIGHT MORE IF YOU DON'T.

OH GOD--
OH *FUCK*--!

I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK O' THAT, I THINK YOU MIGHT'VE NICKED THE FEMORAL. TIE YER BELT ROUND IT QUICK AS YOU CAN, YEAH?

AAAAAAAAAHH, MY HAND...!

THAT AIN'T THE BAD ONE, MATE, THAT AIN'T GONNA KILL YOU. COME ON, TIE IT UP TIGHT.

THERE, HOW'S THAT?

FUCK.

AW FUCK.

FUCK, I CAN HARDLY MOVE.

SHITE...

OH, TOO BAD, MY SON. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE BOTH STUCK.

STILL, LUCKY FOR YOU THAT LANDED THE WRONG WAY UP, EH?

AW, NOW DON'T BLOODY START THAT...!

YOU KNOW I CAN'T STAND THAT, IF THERE'S--

HOW COULD YOU?

HOW COULD YOU DO IT?

I TOLD YOU. THERE'S NO POINT GOIN' OVER AN' OVER IT AGAIN, JUST BE GRATEFUL I BOLLOCKSED IT UP...

I'M NO' TALKIN' ABOUT THAT.

M.M.. FRENCHIE AN' HER.

HOW *COULD YOU...?*

FUCK.

I NEVER WANTED IT TO END THE WAY IT DID. I THOUGHT I'D GOT YOU ALL OUT O' THE WAY, YOU'D JUST...

DIE ALONG WI' EVERYBODY ELSE?

KNOWIN' NOTHIN'.

D'YOU KEN VAS BLED TO DEATH IN THAT PLACE? THE POLICE REPORT SAID HE'D TAKEN HALF AN HOUR TO DIE?

AH, THE POOR CUNT.

I THOUGHT THE THIRD ONE DONE FOR HIM, I REALLY DID.

BUT ANY ONE OF 'EM COULDA STOPPED ME, WITH WHAT THEY KNEW. THEY HAD TO GO.

BUT IT WAS *THEM*...!

YEAH, I KNOW.

I KILLED ME FIRST MAN AT SEVENTEEN, HUGHIE. DONE A LOT MORE SINCE THEN. AN' EVERY TIME I GET THAT FEELIN' I TOLD YOU ABOUT, LIKE I'M WATCHIN' FROM SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY.

IT AIN'T LIKE I DON'T KNOW IT'S WRONG, BUT... IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM, OR SOMETHIN'. AN' IT'S WHAT LETS ME GET THE JOB DONE WITHOUT WORRYIN' ABOUT IT LATER.

I DUNNO, IT PROBABLY JUST MEANS I'M SOME SORT O' PSYCHOPATH...

THE JOB. FUCKSAKE.

AN' I WAS MEANT TO TALK YOU OUTTA GOIN' THROUGH WI' THE PLAN, IS THAT RIGHT?

'CAUSE I SORT O' DOUBT YER WEE BROTHER STOPPED YOU DOIN' WHATEVER IT WAS PHYSICALLY...

SPOT ON. HE WAS JUST A DECENT FUCKIN' BLOKE, SAME AS YOU.

SO YOU PLANNED THIS OUT, RIGHT FROM THE BLOODY START, HAVIN' SOMEONE TO--

NAH, IT WAS JUST AN IDEA AT THE BACK O' ME HEAD. SORT O' CAME TOGETHER THE SAME TIME I WAS THINKIN' ABOUT DOIN' THE SUPES.

I READ THE FILE ON YOU WHEN I WENT TO SEE MONKEY, BUT IT WASN'T 'TIL I MET YOU I STARTED TO THINK...HERE, THIS COULD BE HIM.

YOU AN' YER BLEEDIN' MORAL STREAK.

BUT YOU WERE ALWAYS TELLIN' ME TO TOUGHEN UP, AN' GET USED TO HITTIN' FOLK AN' ALL...

YEAH, BUT THAT WAS FOR SURVIVAL. AN' I DID A FUCKSIGHT MORE'N JUST TELL YOU; IT WAS ME TIPPED OFF TEENAGE KIX WHO'D DONE THE DIRTY ON 'EM, AN' I LEFT YOU TO IT WITH SWINGWING AN' ALL.

WHAT...?

AN' NONE OF IT MADE A BLIND BIT O' DIFFERENCE. YOU STAYED YERSELF NO MATTER WHAT I DONE.

FUCK, I DOUBT YOU EVEN LIKED KILLIN' A-TRAIN ALL THAT MUCH, EVEN WITH WHAT YOU WERE AFTER THE TOSSER FOR...

I FUCKIN' *HATED* DOIN' THAT--!

THERE YOU ARE.

I'D MORE OR LESS GIVEN UP ON YOU STOPPIN' ME AT ALL, D'YOU KNOW THAT? I WAS THINKIN' THE OTHER DAY, SHIT, MAYBE I SHOULD'VE GONE FOR SOMEONE MORE LIKE MESELF-- BUT THEN SOMEONE LIKE ME WOULDN'T'VE *WANTED* TO STOP ME, WOULD THEY?

IN THE END YOU'RE JUST LIKE LENNY WAS. A GOOD LITTLE BLOKE WHO CAN'T HELP BEIN' REASONABLE.

I WAS GONNA *TRY* AN' FIGHT YOU, LIKE. I WENT TO M.M.'S MUM, I DRANK MOTHER'S MILK'S MOTHER'S MILK...

JESUS--!

BUT I EVEN MADE A PIG'S EAR O' THAT, DIDN'T I?

I DUNNO.

MAYBE IF I HADN'T BEEN WHO I AM...WELL, YOU MIGHT NOT'VE WANTED TO SAVE MY LIFE A MINUTE AGO.

AN' WE WOULDN'T BE WHERE WE ARE NOW. VERY TRUE.

FUCK...!

I JUST--I'M SITTIN' HERE TALKIN' AWAY TO YOU LIKE NOTHIN'S HAPPENED, AN'--I JUST CAN'T GET IT INTO MY HEAD THAT THIS IS WHO YOU'VE TURNED OUT TO *BE*...

'FRAID SO, MY SON.

THEN AGAIN, I WAS THE ONE PUT THE BOYS BACK TOGETHER AFTER MALLORY LOST HIS BOTTLE. I MADE 'EM WHAT THEY WERE MEANT TO BE.

I GOT VOGELBAUM WORKIN' ON FUCKIN' SUPE-SEEKIN' MISSILES; THE HOMELANDER AN' HIS MATES WOULD'VE CAUSED A LOT MORE BOTHER IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR ME.

YOU NEED BLOKES LIKE ME, HUGHIE.

IT'S WHAT WE GET UP TO IN OUR SPARE TIME YOU'VE GOTTA WORRY ABOUT.

JESUS, WHERE THE FUCK'RE THE COPS?

I SAID TERRORISTS. THAT'S THE MAGIC WORD.

I RECKON WE'LL BE WAITIN' A BIT YET.

...SO, CALL ME BACK.

I DON'T KNOW WHY I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU. TODAY WAS AWFUL, I REALLY NEED TO UNWIND.

CALL ME.

MUTE

BREAKING NEWS

MUTE

BREAKING NEWS

CAPITOL HILL

LIVE

MUTE

--CAN'T MAKE ANY COMMENT ON MY TESTIMONY TO CONGRESS...

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT CAUSED YOUR CHANGE OF HEART?

I'M AFRAID I HAVE NO COMMENT AT THIS TIME. I'M SORRY.

ALTHOUGH STILLWELL REMAINED TIGHT-LIPPED, IT HAS BEEN CONFIRMED THAT AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE WAS CONVENED THIS EVENING...

APPARENTLY-- ACCORDING TO SOURCES WITHIN THE SENATE--AS A RESULT OF THE WITNESS CONTACTING A SENIOR CONGRESSIONAL FIGURE WITH A VIEW TO SUPPLYING FRESH EVIDENCE...

WHAT?

WHILE **REPORTS** FROM THE COMMITTEE SESSION REMAIN **LIGHT ON DETAIL IN SOME AREAS,** ONE ASPECT OF JAMES STILLWELL'S EVIDENCE SEEMS **CRYSTAL-CLEAR:** HIS IDENTIFYING **VOUGHT-AMERICAN SENIOR EXECUTIVE JESSICA BRADLEY** AS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE **BREAKDOWN IN CONTROL** THAT LED TO THE **DISASTROUS EVENTS OF LAST NOVEMBER...**

NO MORE ROCK THE

BREAKING NEWS

THE **SAME CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES** HAVE REVEALED THAT STILLWELL CITED A DATE **EARLY LAST YEAR,** WHEN HE HANDED OVER **DIRECT OPERATIONAL CONTROL** OF THE CORPORATION'S SUPERHUMAN DEVELOPMENT DIVISION **TO BRADLEY**--A DATE FOR WHICH HE PROVIDED **DOCUMENTED PROOF.**

STILLWELL **ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY** FOR BRADLEY'S APPOINTMENT, BUT **DID SAY** THAT HE **SPECIFICALLY CAUTIONED HER** TO **WATCH** THE VARIOUS SUPERTEAMS--ADVISING **EXTRA VIGILANCE** REGARDING THE SEVEN AND THE HOMELANDER **IN PARTICULAR.** MS. BRADLEY, HE SAID, **SADLY CHOSE** TO **IGNORE HIS ADVICE** AND PURSUE HER **OWN AGENDA.**

WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO **WHY** THE PREMIER SUPERTEAM WAS DEEMED **WORTH WATCHING,** STILLWELL REPLIED THAT THE SEVEN WERE SIMPLY VOUGHT'S **LARGEST SOURCE** OF REVENUE.

HE WAS **THEN ASKED** IF HE BELIEVED THAT **HAD HE HIMSELF** CONTINUED IN THE EXECUTIVE ROLE, EVENTS WOULD HAVE **GONE DIFFERENTLY**--BUT **DECLINED TO ANSWER,** SAYING THAT HIS **OWN JUDGMENTS** WOULD BE **INAPPROPRIATE.**

AND WE'VE **JUST HEARD** THAT A **SPOKESMAN** FOR VOUGHT-AMERICAN, SPEAKING FROM THE COMPANY'S **NEW YORK OFFICES,** HAS **PRAISED** WHAT HE CALLED STILLWELL'S **PROFOUND ACT OF CONSCIENCE...**

YES--AH-- LET ME JUST SAY THAT LOYALTY TO A CO-WORKER IS CERTAINLY ADMIRABLE, BUT AT VOUGHT WE EXPECT A LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY THAT EXTENDS BEYOND COMPANY POLITICS. WE REMAIN **COMPLETELY COMMITTED** TO THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH SURROUNDING LAST YEAR'S TRAGIC EVENTS, AND WE HOPE THAT TODAY'S STATEMENT BY A TRUSTED EXECUTIVE OFFICER WILL SERVE TO REITERATE THAT FACT.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS: AT VOUGHT-AMERICAN, WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BOARDROOM **DOES NOT** STAY IN THE BOARDROOM.

YOU'VE HAD YOUR EYE ON ME FOR *NINE YEARS?*

YOU WERE... WAITING FOR ME TO REACH A PARTICULAR POSITION, OR...?

ONE APPROPRIATE TO YOUR POTENTIAL. AS INDICATED BY YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND GENERAL APTITUDE.

BUT YOU GOT THERE SOME TIME AGO; I'VE SIMPLY BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO APPROACH ME IN PERSON.

YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T BE QUITE SO QUICK TO DESPAIR, MS. BRADLEY. DON'T FORGET YOU'RE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TEAM.

OF THE VOUGHT-AMERICAN FAMILY.

THE SECOND IS TO PROTECT MS. BRADLEY. SHE IS AS IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF THIS COMPANY AS ANY OTHER SENIOR OFFICER.

HMM.

I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD TELL YOU, MS. BRADLEY.

BUT I FEEL I CAN RELAX AROUND YOU.

NO...!

DID YOU HAVE TO COME IN PAST THAT MOB OUTSIDE? DID NO ONE INFORM YOU THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL MORE DISCRETE ENTRANCES FOR OCCASIONS LIKE THIS?

NO...

THIS. IT'S THIS.

JESUS, I'M THE FACE OF IT NOW.

NO...

TAKE MY HAND. TAKE HEART.

IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY.

NO...

AND FOLLOWING ON FROM THAT... CONSIDERING HOW RADICAL SOME OF THE MOVES YOU'RE GOING TO BE MAKING ARE RUMORED TO BE...

THEN THE MOST SENSIBLE CHOICE--AT LEAST FROM YOUR POINT OF VIEW--

WOULD BE A FALL GUY.

NNNAAAAAAAAH!

I DON'T SUPPOSE...YOU WANNA TELL ME WHERE YOU'VE GOT ALL THESE BLOODY BOMBS HIDDEN...?

HAVE A LOOK ON ME PHONE.

THEY AIN'T GONNA GO OFF ON THEIR OWN, BUT...WELL, WHO GIVES A FUCK NOW, EH?

COME TO THINK OF IT, IF YOU EVER WANNA GET YER OWN BACK ON RAYNER YOU'LL FIND EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED ON THERE AN' ALL...

I COULDN'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT RAYNER.

ALL THIS FOR ONE WOMAN.

YEAH.

NOT EVEN FOR HER, FOR HER MEMORY.

MM-HM.

YOU DIDN'T KNOW HER, HUGHIE. YOU DUNNO WHAT SHE MEANT TO ME.

WHAT SHE MADE ME INTO.

IS THERE ANYTHIN' YOU WOULDN'T DO FOR BLONDIE?

I--WHAT--

I KNOW YOU'RE STILL SEEIN' HER.

BUT-- BUT-- HOW--

WILD GUESS.

OH.

YOU'RE... YOU'RE NO' GONNA COME OUT WI' ALL SORTS O' HORRIBLE STUFF ABOUT HER, ARE YOU?

'CAUSE I JUST DON'T THINK I HAVE ENOUGH MEANNESS IN ME, TO SAY AWFUL THINGS ABOUT YER WIFE...

I AIN'T GONNA SAY NOTHIN' HORRIBLE.

GOOD.

SHE TURNED OUT TO BE PRETTY MUCH THE EXACT OPPOSITE O' WHAT YOU SAID SHE WAS.

GLAD TO HEAR IT.

YOU LOVE HER?

I DO. I REALLY DO.

BUT I THINK I MIGHT BE A BIT LATE THERE, 'CAUSE I'VE FUCKED THINGS UP ABOUT AS BADLY AS I COULD'VE.

WELL THEN YOU'RE A FUCKIN' NOB-END, AIN'T YOU?

EH...?

GRAB HOLD OF HER, HUGHIE.

WRAP YER ARMS AROUND HER.

BREATHE HER IN.

FEEL HER STRENGTH INSIDE YER OWN.

AN' NEVER, EVER, EVER LET HER GO.

SEE, THAT WAS SOMETHIN' BECKY TOLD ME. I DIDN'T QUITE GET IT AT THE TIME.

BUT SHE SAID MEN WITHOUT WOMEN, IT WASN'T A GOOD IDEA. AN' SHE WAS RIGHT.

'COS ALL THAT MACHO SHIT-- THAT GUNFIGHTER, DIRTY HARRY BOLLOCKS--IT LOOKS TASTY, BUT IN THE END IT'S FUCKIN' SELF-DEFEATIN'.

IT JUST LEAVES YOU WITH BODIES IN DITCHES AN' BLOKES WITH HEADFULS O' BROKEN GLASS.

MEN ARE ONLY SO MUCH USE, HUGHIE.

MEN ARE BOYS.

I...AW, FUCK.

I JUST WISH... THINGS...

JESUS--!

NYPD

CHRIST ALMIGHTY, THEY SCARED THE FUCKIN' SHITE OUTTA ME!

YEAH, AN' THEY'RE GONNA HAVE SWAT AN' PARAMEDICS UP HERE IN NO TIME.

WHAT? FUCK, I CAN'T EVEN--

NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE, HUGHIE.

YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO KILL ME.

WHAT...?

I'M FUCKIN' SERIOUS. I'VE BROKEN ME NECK HERE, I CAN'T FEEL A BLEEDIN' THING.

WAIT A SECOND, NO, I--

THEY'LL BANG ME UP FOR LIFE. I DON'T GIVE A FUCK ABOUT DOIN' THE TIME-- BUT NOT TRAPPED IN ME OWN USELESS CARCASS, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

THERE'S NO BLOODY WAY I'M--

HUGHIE, YOU AIN'T GONNA LEAVE ME HERE LIKE A FUCKIN' RASPBERRY RIPPLE, COME ON...!

YOU DESERVE IT. YOU FUCKIN' WELL DESERVE IT.

I MIGHT WELL DO, BUT IF YOU'RE GONNA PUNISH ME YOU COULD AT LEAST LOOK ME IN THE BLOODY EYE. OR ARE YOU GONNA LEAVE IT UP TO SOME OTHER CUNT TO DO YER DIRTY WORK?

HUGHIE--

NO!

HUGHIE...

NO--!

THERE'S ONLY THE BLOODY TWO OF US LEFT, I'M NO' GONNA FUCKIN' PUT YOU DOWN LIKE A DOG...!

YEAH YOU FUCKIN' ARE, HUGHIE.

'COS OF ANNIE JANUARY.

AW FOR FUCK'S SAKE, I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GONNA START IN ABOUT THAT! BUT OH AYE, THERE YOU GO, THE SAME OLD EVIL BLOODY--

NOT THE BIRD, SUNSHINE. I'M TALKIN' ABOUT YER DAD'S BOAT.

WH--

HE CHANGED THE NAME. THAT'S HOW MUCH HE LIKED HER.

I SPIKED HIS HEAD ON THE END O' THE TILLER. AFTER I'D FINISHED SPREADIN' YER MUM ALL OVER HER KITCHEN.

BOLLOCKS. *FUCKIN' BOLLOCKS.* THERE'S *NO WAY...*

SEVEN WATKINS LANE, LAST HOUSE ON THE RIGHT. I READ YER FILE, REMEMBER?

YOU SHOULDN'T'VE PISSED ME OFF FUCKIN' ABOUT WITH MALLORY, MY SON. THAT WAS BANG OUTTA ORDER, YOU SHOULDN'T'VE GONE AN' DONE THAT.

WHAT D'YOU WANNA HEAR ABOUT? THE WANKY BLOODY SEVENTIES WALLPAPER, OR THE STUPID OLD CUNT'S PIPE?

OR WHAT ABOUT THAT PONCEY FUCKIN' POEM UP ON THE WALL O' YER BEDROOM, FUCK ME, DID I HAVE A RIGHT LAUGH AT THAT...!

LOOK AT ME. FUCKIN' *LOOK AT ME.*

YOU KNOW I DONE IT.

FUCKER!

FUCKER!

CUNT!!

...NICE ONE, MATE.

HULLO...?

MAW!!

HUGHIE...!

ECK! ECK! IT'S HUGHIE ON THE PHONE!

MAW! JESUS FUCKIN' CHRIST, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT--?

OCH, SON, YE KEN I DON'T LIKE YE USIN' THAT SORT OF OUL' TALK, NOW...

MAW, *PLEASE* JUST TELL ME YOU AN' PAW ARE OKAY...!

O' COURSE WE ARE, WHY WOULDN'T WE BE? OCH, D'YE KEN WE HAD YER FRIEND HERE LAST YEAR, MISTER BUTCHER...?

WHAT... DID HE...

OH, HE WAS AN AWFULLY NICE MAN. AN' SO FUNNY, HIM AN' YER PAW GOT ON LIKE A HOOSE ON FIRE.

HE SAID HE WAS IN THE AREA AN' HE THOUGHT HE'D SEE WHERE YE GREW UP. WE SHOWED HIM ALL ROUND THE PLACE.

HE TOLD US HE WAS SORT O' YER BOSS, BUT I MUST SAY HE SEEMED VERY FOND O' YE.

HE ASKED US TO TELL YE HE SAID HELLO. I'M NO' SURE WHY, I THOUGHT HE'D PROBABLY SEE YE SOONER'N WE DID.

AWFULLY NICE MAN.

HERE, ECK, D'YE WANT TO SAY HULLO TO HUGHIE?

THE END

#72 cover
by Darick Robertson
and Tony Aviña

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BOOK ISSUE PAGE ARTIST
ILLUSTRATION QUALITY PAPER FOR FULL BLEED AND REGULAR COMIC P

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ISSUE PAGE ARTIST
PER FOR FULL BLEED AND REGULAR COMIC

Darick Robertson's final inks for his cover to #72

FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN. ABUT PAGE EDGES. TAPE ON BACK. DO NOT OVERLAP
ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKEN LINE BOX (LIVE AREA

◀ CUT RIGHT HAND PAGE AT THIS LINE

FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD: CUT AS SHOWN. ABUT PAGE EDGES. TAPE ON BACK. DO NO
ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE. KEEP ALL LETTERING INSIDE BROKE

SIX MONTHS LATER

H2O

AH, YOU LOAD O' WANKERS.

YOU'RE NEVER GONNA KEN HOW CLOSE YOU CAME.

COME ON THEN, JAMIE.

TIME TO GO IN, WEE PAL.

NO' BAD, YANKS.

NO' BAD AT ALL.

CONSTRUCTION'S STILL GOT A LONG WAY TO GO, IT'S DIGNITARIES ONLY FOR TODAY'S--

OH, SORRY, SIR.

I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE...

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, OFFICER, YOU'RE JUST DOIN' YER JOB.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

ATTENTION

AREA UNDER NYPD VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

AND OF THE CURVESHIP
LEND A MYTH TO
GOD
-- HART CRANE

AND OF THE CURVESHIP
LEND A MYTH TO
GOD
-- HART CRANE

THERE YOU GO, BOYS.

THAT'S YOU.

HAVE A SEAT.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

MM--

YOU BEEN FOLLOWIN' THE ELECTION?

I WAS READIN' INTERVIEWS WI' MCCAIN AND OBAMA, AN' I DIDN'T SEE TROOP WITHDRAWALS MENTIONED ONCE.

TOO BAD. ALL THAT LOVELY MONEY YOU'D'VE MADE, IF YOU'D MANAGED TO GET SUPES INTO PAKISTAN.

IS THAT WHAT--

NO, I CALLED YOU 'CAUSE I SAW YOU'D REBRANDED. ***AMERICAN CONSOLIDATED,*** THAT'S NO' EXACTLY WHAT YOU'D CALL SUBTLE, IS IT?

THAT WAS PRIMARILY FOR THE MARKETS. WHERE MEMORIES WORK TO DIFFERENT PRIORITIES.

AYE, I BET. WE SHOULD'VE GONE STRAIGHT AT THE FUCKIN' CORPORATION IN THE FIRST PLACE, INSTEAD O' WASTIN' OUR TIME ON THE DICKHEADS IN TIGHTS.

WHAT'RE YOU ON THE BOOKS AS NOW, THEN? CONSULTANT?

YOU WON'T FIND ME LISTED AT ALL.

WEE BIT TOO TOXIC, WERE YOU? I SUPPOSE YOU WOULD'VE BEEN, EVEN AFTER THE BUSINESS WI' WHATSHERNAME.

HERE YOU GO, HERE'S A BIT O' CONSULTIN' FOR YOU TO DO. THEY'LL LOVE YOU WHEN YOU BRING THEM THIS.

IF YOU THINK I'M EVEN GOING TO TOUCH THAT--

DON'T BE DAFT, I'M NO' BLOODY TRYNNA GIVE YOU DRUGS.

WEE WHILE AGO, I SCRAPED THAT OFF A THOUSAND POUND BLOCK O' THE STUFF IN A WAREHOUSE IN MEXICO CITY.

GIVE IT TO YER RESEARCH GUYS. THEY'LL TELL YOU THERE'S TRACES O' PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE--BUT THAT'S JUST FROM THE I.E.D. THAT WAS WIRED TO IT.

THE REST OF IT--AN' THE FELLA'LL PROBABLY COME CRASHIN' INTO YER OFFICE SCREAMIN' THIS BIT--

WELL, D'YOU REMEMBER THAT CARRY-ON IN MOSCOW? WI' THE ADAPTED V-COMPOUND COULD BLOW SUPES' HEADS OFF, IF YOU GOT THE SIGNAL JUST RIGHT?

AND I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THIS?

I NOTICE YOU'VE NO' GOT UP AN' FUCKED OFF.

SOMEONE GOT THE SIGNAL RIGHT. AS A MATTER O' FACT, THEY FIXED IT SO YOU DON'T NEED A SIGNAL AT ALL--EXCEPT THE ONE THAT SETS OFF THE FIRST I.E.D..

WHICH THEN SETS OFF THE NEXT TWO HUNDRED AN' FIFTY-NINE, IN SEQUENCE. SUDDENLY MAKIN' THIS A VERY DIFFERENT PLANET INDEED.

YOU WOULD DO THAT?

ME OR SOMEONE ELSE THINKS YOU'RE A PRICK.

THE FIRST THING YOU LOT'RE GONNA DO, 'CAUSE O' YER LONG STANDIN' TIES TO THE CITY O' NEW YORK, IS SET UP A FOUNDATION TO REBUILD THE FLATIRON BUILDIN'. THEN YOU'RE GONNA FUND IT.

WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED THERE...

LIFE'S A FUCKER THAT WAY.

THE OTHER THING YOU'RE GONNA DO... IS WATCH YERSELVES.

I'M NO' NAÏVE. I KEN THERE'S STILL PLENTY O' SUPES ABOUT, AN I KEN YOU'RE STILL GONNA TRY AN' TURN A PROFIT OFF THEM. AN' I'M NO' GONNA COMMIT GENOCIDE JUST TO TRY AN' STOP THE TIDE FROM COMIN' IN.

SO IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL. FUN AN' GAMES AN' PRETTY COLORS. BUT YOU SEE THE FIRST TIME YOU TAKE THOSE FLYIN' FUCKIN' ARSEHOLES ANYWHERE NEAR *ANY COUNTRY'S* DEFENSE INDUSTRY...?

YOU SHOULDN'T GET SO SENTIMENTAL ABOUT THIS PLACE, YOU KNOW.

EH...?

IT'S A MERCANTILE TOWN.

IT ALWAYS WAS.

AND YOU AND I JUST DID BUSINESS.

JESUS CHRIST, YOU BLOODLESS FUCKIN'--

WHO *ARE YOU*...?

I'M AN EXPRESSION OF THE CORPORATION.

I'M THE VOICE THAT SAYS-- YOU'RE RIGHT, SUE US.

THAT NEVER GETS UPSET.

YOU THINK YOU'VE WON...

DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE?

WE ALWAYS WIN. WE'RE A REGISTERED TRADEMARK. YOU COULD SNAP MY NECK RIGHT THIS MOMENT, AND WE'D STILL WIN.

OR WILL YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, AND COMMIT AN ATROCITY TO PREVENT US FROM TURNING A PROFIT?

I DON'T WORK ON WALL STREET. THIS IS A POINTLESS CONVERSATION.

WHAT'LL YOU DO?

AYE, WELL.

YOU CAN DRESS IT UP ANY WAY YOU WANT, YOU CAN SAY YOU'RE JUST DOIN' BUSINESS. BUT I KEN YOU WALL STREET CUNTS'RE THE KIND'D HAND FOLK OVER TO DEATH SQUADS, IF YOU THOUGHT THERE WAS ANY MONEY IN IT.

YOU'LL NEVER SELL SUPES TO THE U.S. MILITARY, WITH OR WITHOUT WHAT I'VE GOT HANGIN' OVER YOU.

WHAT'LL YOU DO?

WHY, SOMETHING ELSE.

...BECAUSE THIS COUNTRY SUPPORTS ITS TROOPS! AMERICA LOOKS AFTER ITS WARRIORS! THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO FIGHT OUR WARS, WE DON'T JUST SHUT THEM UP WITH A COUPLE OF MEDALS AND PUT THEM OUT TO GRASS...!

SUSAN L. RAYNER FOR SENATOR

BUT I HAVE SPOKEN TO VETERANS' GROUPS AND WOUNDED HEROES RIGHT ACROSS THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS, AND I CAN TELL YOU THERE IS MUCH WORK YET TO BE DONE.

THE REPUBLICANS PAY LIP SERVICE TO THE TROOPS THEIR ADMINISTRATION SENT TO WAR, BUT WHAT HAVE THEY ACTUALLY ***DONE*** FOR THEM? WELL, I'LL TELL YOU. THEY'VE CUT PROGRAM AFTER PROGRAM, CLOSED HOSPITAL AFTER HOSPITAL. THEY ***DON'T CARE.***

WHEN I PROVIDED THE DATA THAT LED TO THE DEFEAT OF LAST YEAR'S SUPERHUMAN INSURRECTION, MY ***FIRST THOUGHT*** WAS FOR THE ***PILOTS AND MARINES*** WHO WOULD HAVE TO DO BATTLE THAT DAY. AND I RESOLVED THEN AND THERE THAT WERE THEY TO BE WOUNDED, I WOULD ***NOT ABANDON*** THOSE AMERICAN WARRIORS--ANY MORE THAN I WOULD LEAVE MY ***OWN AGENTS,*** THE UNSUNG HEROES OF SO MANY COVERT CONFLICTS, TO TWIST IN THE WIND.

I SAID TO MYSELF--I ***CANNOT*** SIMPLY WALK AWAY FROM THIS. I WILL ***SEEK ELECTION*** TO THE SENATE. AND I WILL COME ***BACK*** TO WASHINGTON AND ***FIGHT,*** FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO FIGHT FOR ***US***...

AND I ***ALSO*** SAID--

I'M A WHORE!

SUSAN L. RAYNER FOR SENATOR

I'M A WHORE, I'M A WHORE! I'M A FUCKING WHORE!

HEH HEH HEH HEH!

I'M A DIRTY FUCKING WHORE GETTING FUCKED BY A PIG!

HA HA HA HA HA HA...!

FOR

RAYNER SENATOR

OH GOD, OH FUCK--OH JESUS CHRIST, YOU'RE TEARING ME APART, YOU BASTARD--!

OH, THAT'S IT, THAT'S IT! OH, FUCK!

OH GOD I'M GONNA COME, JUST LIKE THE DIRTY WHORE I AAAAAAAAAAHH

RAYNER IS RIGHT

UHH... UHH...UHH... AAAAH!!

FIND IT, YOU ASSHOLES, WHERE THE FUCK IS IT COMING FROM--?

OH MY FUCKING GOD, YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME...!

OH, FUCK MY FUCKING SLUTTY CUNT...THAT'S RIGHT, FUCK MY WHORE'S CUNT OH GOD--

HA HA HA! HA HA HA!

YOU MOTHERFUCKER-- OH, WHY AM I DOING THIS, WHAT A WHORE--!

WHO THE FUCK COULD--

NO.

SUSAN RAYNER IS A WHORE

HA HA HA HA HA!

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH...!

YOU'RE A NASTY WEE MAN, AREN'T YOU, MONKEY?

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE SHE SHOULD'VE SEEN SENSE AN' JUST CONFIRMED YER PROMOTION.

YOU'RE WELCOME. TA FOR THE PASSPORT, BY THE WAY.

RIGHT, I'M GONNA HAVE TO HANG UP NOW. I THINK I CAN HEAR WHAT YOU'RE DOIN' THERE.

CHEERIO.

I WOULDN'T SAY BY HIS FINGERNAILS. I WOULDN'T EVEN SAY LAME DUCK.

BUT EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT HE PULLED, EVERYONE KNOWS HE ESCAPED THE HANGMAN BY THE SKIN OF HIS TEETH, AND HE'S GOING TO NEED A WIN--A BIG WIN--TO REMIND THE POWERS THAT BE HOW VALUABLE HE IS...

ARE THEY READY?

AC

I SAW IT COMING

SHOUT OUT

with JAYSON BLAIR

OH, THERE YOU ARE, SIR, WE DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN. YES, THEY'RE READY...

THEN LET'S TAKE A LOOK.

WE THOUGHT THE BEST WAY FORWARD WOULD BE TO EMPHASIZE NOT JUST PURITY BUT *CONFORMITY.* YOU KNOW--THE OTHERS WENT WRONG BECAUSE THEY STRAYED FROM THE PATH, THEY WOULDN'T FOLLOW THE RULES...

BUT THE NEW GENERATION DON'T EVEN THINK THAT WAY. THERE'S AN IDEAL TO LIVE UP TO HERE. A SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE.

WE'RE THINKING OF SIMPLY CALLING THEM *TRUE.*

WE'VE SPOKEN TO THE PEOPLE OVER AT VICTORY, THEY'RE ALREADY VERY EXCITED--

THAT ONE HAS AN ERECTION.

THAT ONE IS SUFFERING SOME KIND OF WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS.

THAT ONE IS PLAINLY THE DEEP.

YES...WELL, WE DID EXPERIMENT WITH VARIOUS FORMS OF BEHAVIOURAL INHIBITOR, BUT THE RESULTS...

LET'S JUST SAY THEY MADE THE RESURRECTION PROCESS LOOK GOOD.

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO START AGAIN.

WHAT?

WHAT *WITH?*

SOMETHING THAT ISN'T JUST THE SAME OLD SHIT DRESSED UP.

AND WHERE EXACTLY DO YOU PROPOSE TO FIND THAT?

THEY'RE NEVER GOING TO CHANGE, YOU KNOW, THEY'RE ALWAYS GOING TO HAVE EXACTLY THE SAME SET OF PROBLEMS...!

BAD PRODUCT.

SAY JINGS FOR ME.

JINGS...

THERE YOU GO.

OH, GOD.

OH, GOD.

OH GOD OH GOD?

I WAS A WEE BIT SCARED YOU'D NO' COME.

YOU BAMPOT...!

RYBANT

AFTER EVERYTHING YOU TOLD ME ON THE PHONE?

OH, GOD.

YOU KNOW, IT'S JUST OCCURRED TO ME: BAMPOT'S ***MY WORD.*** I OBJECT TO YER CULTURAL COLONISATION OF IT.

OH, YOU DO?

NEXT THING YOU KNOW YOU'LL BE PUTTIN' IT ON A T-SHIRT. PULLIN' MY TEETH, MAKIN' ME COSY AN' ACCEPTABLE.

RIGHT, BECAUSE YOU'RE SO EDGY.

ARE YOU OKAY WITH ALL OF IT?

AYE.

I MEAN I'M GONNA MISS MY PALS, LIKE. THEY WERE...

THERE WAS NOTHIN' LIKE THEM IN THE WORLD.

WHAT ABOUT THE GUY, THE ONE IN CHARGE?

HE'S IN HELL.

KICKIN' THE *FUCK* OUT O' THE DEVIL.

AN' NOW I NEVER WANNA TALK ABOUT HIM AGAIN.

I'VE BEEN AWFULLY LUCKY, ANNIE.

I CAME RIGHT THROUGH THE WHOLE THING IN ONE PIECE. I NEVER HAD TO TURN INTO A MONSTER. THERE MIGHT BE FOLK THAT THINK I DID, BUT I'M HAPPY TO LET THEM.

I SAW ALL SORTS O' NIGHTMARES AN' MADE ALL SORTS O' DAFT MISTAKES, BUT I GOT TO STAY THE FELLA I AM:

AN' THE FELLA I AM LOVES ANNIE JANUARY.

GOOD. BECAUSE ANNIE JANUARY'S IN LOVE WITH THAT FELLA, TOO.

OH GOD, LOOK AT IT. ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL?

I THOUGHT IT MIGHT MAKE A NICE NEW PLACE FOR US.

MM...?

WELL, YOU KNOW. WE HAD THE PARK, BUT... IT'S MAYBE A WEE BIT SAD FOR US NOW.

I'D LIKE THAT. I'D LIKE IT TO BE OUR PLACE. COME ON.

IT STIRRED AN OLD FAMILIAR TERROR, THIS. IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT.

BUT SHE SAW. AND SHE SMILED.

AND SHE SAID

IT'S OKAY.

IT'S OKAY, HUGHIE.

DA
RI
CK
-FIN-
2012

YOU FOUND ME

The BOYS™

OMNIBUS
BONUS MATERIAL

BOYS OUTLINE & COMMENTARY

What follows is the original outline I turned in for The Boys ongoing series. The reader will notice a number of differences between this and what actually saw print, which is only natural in any project as ideas develop and/or fall by the wayside. The series enjoyed rather a long gestation period, largely due to Darick having a couple of Marvel exclusives to work his way through- this turned out to be something of a boon, as I was able to take more time to develop the story and characters in the way I wanted.

Where appropriate I've added my comments on the outline in red. The one change I made to the outline as submitted was Butcher's name; he was initially called Savage, in an affectionate nod to the old 2000AD character Bill Savage. The star of the series Invasion, Savage was an enjoyably psychopathic trucker-turned-guerilla in a Soviet-occupied future Britain, and I thought the association would fit my new character's dark humor rather nicely. Eventually I realized the in-joke was a little too obvious and went for Butcher instead, which worked out best for all concerned- particularly as Savage returned to the pages of 2000AD not long afterward. Still, I like to think of Ol' Bill as Billy Butcher's great-great-grandfather ten times removed, or whatever (I sometimes suspect Warren Ellis' Bill Gravel character might also be one of Savage's bastard offspring).

For the sake of familiarity I've simply given Butcher his real name. I've also removed one or two references to existing characters, a legacy of an initial editorial request that the series should be able to cross over with that company's own superhero universe: a very bad idea that soon fell by the wayside. The rest, however, is what I wrote back in the very beginning.

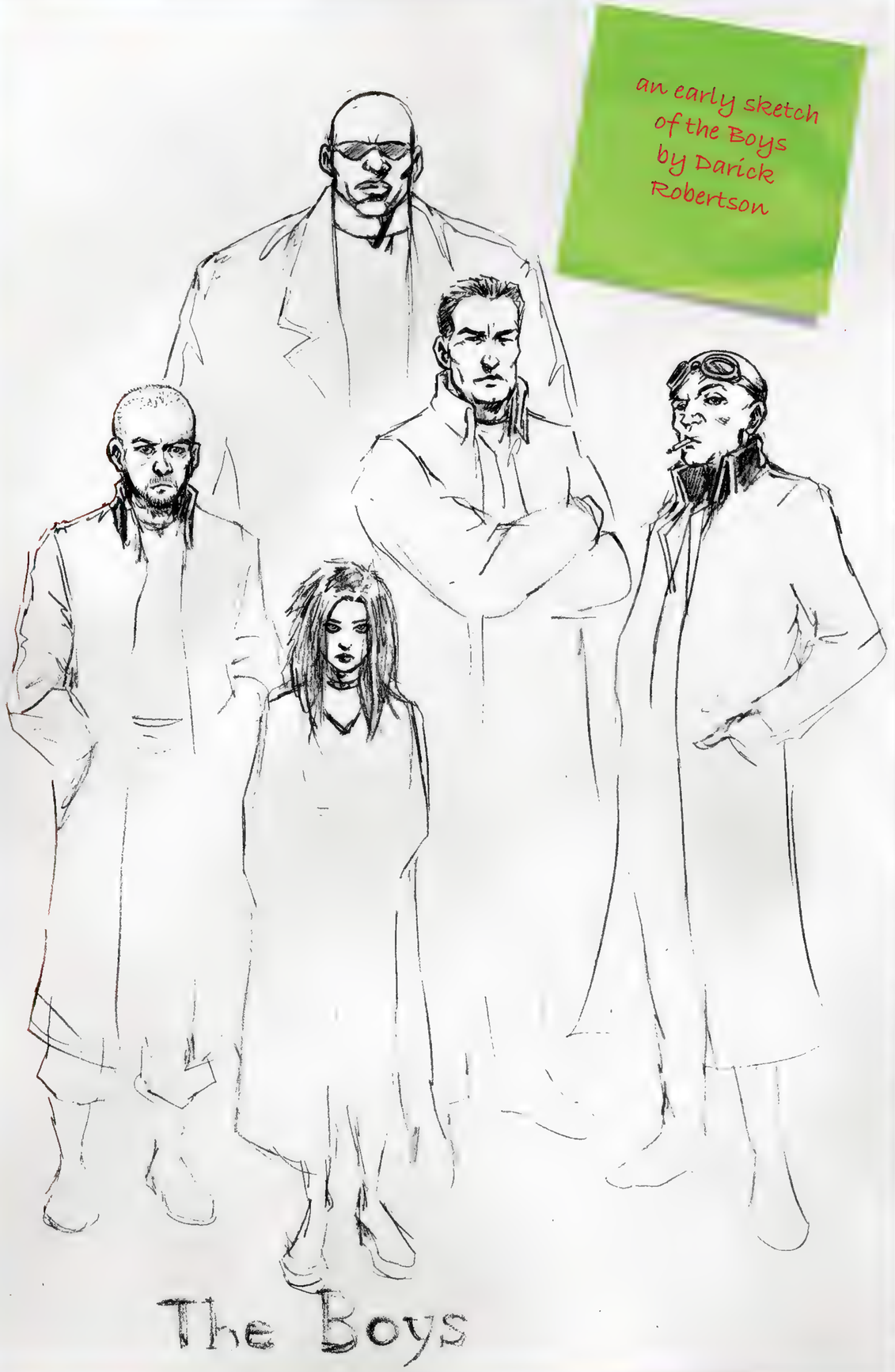
THE BOYS
GARTH ENNIS

Outline for a new ongoing monthly. A mature readers label is essential.

No point in pulling any punches: this is the book that will out-Preacher *Preacher*. It will be hard, vicious, brutal, darkly funny and totally unrelenting. Like *Preacher* it will have a heart underneath all the horror; unlike *Preacher* it will not wear its heart on its sleeve. A lot of people will find the book offensive, so stand by to repel whiners.

The line about out-preachering Preacher drew a good deal of- you guessed it- whining, after we printed it on a poster advertising The Boys. To me, this is a bit like reading In space no one can hear you scream and complaining because the crew of the Nostromo could clearly be heard screaming the bloody walls down, but there you are.

My core idea is that if superheroes exist (and they must by now number in the thousands) then a variety of supercrimes must also exist, and it therefore follows that an entire super-underworld will have developed around them: super-narcotics, super-prostitution, super-pornography, super-gambling, super-extortion and so on. Think of the wilder Hollywood rumors and stories multiplied by a thousand. Think



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This is the side of things that the superheroes don't want you to know about, where everyone needs something, everyone has a weakness, everyone can be played- and nobody trusts anybody else. What goes on behind the façade of "Super-Babylon" will be a major part of the book's I-can't-believe-they're-doing-this appeal.

The Boys are a team of five superpowered operatives who work for a secret department within the U.S. government. It's their job to monitor and investigate superhero behavior, to gather intelligence- ie. dirt- on them, and occasionally to use it against them. Just as the CIA has had a use for the Mafia, Saddam Hussein and Columbia's FARC terrorists (to name but a few), so they also need superheroes. Sometimes they need them on a leash. Sometimes they have to put them down. The Boys are the people who do the job. They have no secret designation or team name beyond "The Boys", which is a nickname from way back, and they have no particular outfit or uniform- beyond a predilection for heavy, black leather overcoats.

The idea of superheroes being directly employed by the CIA did not survive long; what emerged instead was the Agency's long-standing opposition to the Vought-American corporation and its ambitions to employ supes in the military-industrial complex.

Their real "powers" are identical- all members are super-strong, to give them a fighting chance against the characters they encounter. On joining, each member is injected with a top-secret serum developed in some ungodly black ops lab (its more widespread use is precluded by its $14 million-a-shot price tag), and super-strength follows thereafter.

Only when all five of the Boys are together can they employ their real power, however. A by-product of the serum, it allows them- by combined concentration- to switch off superpowers. The five simply surround the target, focus their thoughts, and he or she is instantly rendered no more powerful than an average human being. Magic rings don't work. Speedsters can run no faster than you or I. And Gods are mere mortals.

Fuck me rigid. What next, stand in a circle and shoot beams of love from their eyes?

Jesus!

The worst idea in history notwithstanding, what I realized early on was that action in The Boys shouldn't involve "powers", as such: it should be about the kind of violence that occurs outside bars at 2am, where the victim is surrounded and overwhelmed by individuals intent on his destruction. In other words, totally unfair and highly effective.

Through a combination of power and attitude, these are five of the hardest individuals you'll ever have the misfortune to run across. The very, very last people you'd ever want to meet.

That's a bit more like it...

CHARACTERS

Butcher

The leader of the team, by far the most formidable of the team, possibly the most inherently dangerous man on the planet: Billy Butcher is the hardest of them all. Six foot, late thirties, granite-

jawed, dark-haired, cold-eyed, with a nasty smile that promises horror for you and amusement for him. He has a human side, even a light-hearted side, but he indulges them rarely and lets nothing get in the way of his own agenda- which goes far beyond his employers' remit of manipulating superheroes. Butcher is playing an angle all his own, one he keeps very close to his chest.

In fact, Butcher indulged his light-hearted side all the time- if that particular sense of humor could ever accurately be described as "light-hearted".

Butcher is an Englishman, an ex-Royal Marine Commando who drifted into black ops work for the UK and US governments. He had no particular interest in superheroes until after his retirement, when he awoke one night to find a super-powered foetus tearing its way out of his wife's belly. Barely managing to beat the half-formed horror to death, suffering several heat-vision burns in the process, Butcher could do nothing to save his wife. He found out from her journal that she had in fact been raped by a superhero some months previously- she neither identified her attacker nor reported the incident, and kept it from her husband out of terrible, consuming shame and misplaced guilt. Butcher's obsession with superheroes- or "supes" as he calls them- began at this point, and he joined the fledgling unit that would become The Boys thereafter. He gets to spy on them, manipulate them, destroy their lives and kick the shit out of them on a regular basis, and he wants no more out of life than that- or so he'd have us believe.

The actual sequence of some of these events ended up being re-ordered, and Becky of course did identify her attacker in her journal. Butcher's also slightly older in the series; I reckon he was born in 1965.

Wee Hughie

An amiable, decent, good-hearted little Scottish guy with nothing darker about him than his sense of humor, Hugh Campbell is the team's latest recruit. Short, slim, head shaved, twenty, scruffy goatee and an earring or two, great smile and big sad eyes- a real puppy-dog of a guy. Hughie is not exactly the team's conscience, but he almost seems to be Butcher's- the Boys' brutal leader recruits him partly out of need for the lad's skill, partly as a balance to his own cynicism and violent excess. Exactly how much Butcher needs Hughie will become clear as the series progresses, of which much more later.

Hughie, of course, turned out to have absolutely no skill at anything. Butcher's interest in him as an antidote to his own tendencies evolved along more interesting lines.

Hughie's worldview changes dramatically after his own violent introduction to the world of super-heroes, and subsequent recruitment by the Boys. He retains his essential decency, often balking at the tasks Butcher sets him, but his own desire for vengeance keeps him more or less on track. Hughie, really, is the kind of guy who would try to "save" a hooker from herself, and then wonder how the resultant chaos ever came about.

The other three team members are less important than the double-act of Butcher and Hughie; they make up the numbers, serve as comic relief/headfuck material, generally go what second-stringers do.

When I consider how MM, Frenchie and the Female turned out, as well as the roles they played in the story, I have to say it: that's just mean.

Mother's Milk

The closest the team's got to a genuine hero, MM's strength is derived from "natural" metahuman power rather than the serum (which he still takes to maintain the group's ability to switch off powers). Physically the strongest of the team, this six foot six Ving Rhames-alike (down to the bald head and mirror shades) hides a quiet morality behind his cool exterior. He genuinely feels that superheroes are too powerful not to be monitored and controlled; this is simply the right thing to do for the common good. MM occasionally acts as Wee Hughie's confidante and advisor when Butcher's brutal world-view gets too much to bear- more of a steadying, reassuring presence than the team leader. MM's great weakness (and only Butcher knows this) is that he's a couple of hundred years old; he can only maintain his vitality by drinking his withered crone of a mother's breast mile directly from source. They're down to her knees, to answer your unspoken question.

A lot further than her knees, in fact. The two hundred years-old thing went out the window fairly early on, probably seemed a bit too "super". Otherwise I'm surprised at how close this is to what emerged, although Darick was quite right to differentiate him from the good Mr. Rhames, on whom too many characters have been based over the years. And I don't like this "genuine hero" stuff.

Again with the bloody switching off powers. Thank God Almighty I drove a stake through that one's heart, I'll tell you...

The Frenchman

As mad as a snake, this tall, thin, 30-something nihilist from the Left Bank is perhaps the strangest of the lot. Bearing a striking resemblance to actor Vincent Cassell (shaved head, big eyes, thin features, always-open mouth, hunted look), the Frenchman can usually be found muttering into his espresso about some failed love affair or other. The instant someone makes a nasty remark about the French (not uncommon) he leaps into action, slamming down the goggles he always wears, delivering his trade-mark crushing headbutt to his nearest assailant. He then typically dispatches the rest in an increasingly violent manner, screaming insanely all the while. A mad dog, employed regularly by Butcher in exactly that role, but not without his own strange charm.

He turned out to be a good deal smarter and more human, but that last line isn't a bad summation. There was going to be a lot more crazed muttering into espresso, but that got cut along with the Left Bank stuff. Funny once, then not so much, was how I saw it.

The Female

God alone knows what her real name is, but The Female of the Species (to give her her full name) is indeed the Boys' only female member. Barely five foot tall, dark haired, mousey, like a permanently nervous Janeane Garofalo. Her expressions range from scared to sad to deeply hurt- but just when she reaches her poutiest, shakiest, little-girl-lostest (sorry...), the Female undergoes a terrible change. If we can, I'd like to get well into the book's run before we get a look at what she does, but hideous, bone-crunching violence and dismemberment more or less sum it up. Typically we'll see her enter a house full of undesirables, we'll cut to an exterior shot, and then tidal waves of blood and gore will pour from the doors and windows- accompanied by unearthly screams of agony and horror, of course. Under normal circumstances she's so shy and nervous that she hides behind the Frenchman, as when Wee Hughie tries to introduce himself. The Frenchman seems to connect with her on some weird level of his own, apparently quite fond of her.

Got quite a lot of mileage out of that last part. I also note Frenchie is only referred to as The Frenchman, but that was only going to last so long once he got going and revealed his more amiable side.

I seem to recall suggesting Janeane Garofalo because Darick had met the lady at some

point, and I thought he'd enjoy basing a character on her. Instead he made The Female Asian, which worked out well in that it inspired her Japanese origin- one of my favorite Boys issues. And, of course, it took no time at all before we got a look at the horrors she inflicted.

THE FIRST STORY

I intend to write *The Boys* in nice, neat, easy-to-collect arcs of 3-5 issues, giving us trade paperbacks of 6-10.

When the first issue opens, the Boys are on the inactive list. Having lost one of their number, apparently unable to replace him (thus depriving them of the all-important number of five), the other four are freelancing until something better comes along. The bosses of their handling organization have run into trouble, however, with far too much super-work to be done, and despite the debacle that was their last operation (more on this later), the Boys must now reform.

Interesting to note how much of an instigator Butcher ended up becoming; here he's at the mercy of the CIA and its agenda, whereas he would of course eventually be the driving force behind the Boys' return.

When first we meet Butcher he's in Washington DC working for the CIA, cleaning up the murder of a young rent boy by a prominent lady senator. As the heavily-compromised legislator blubbers out her confession, Butcher sticks his head into the corpse's skull and pulls out the bullets. He explains that they and the other incriminating evidence will disappear, that she will be voting according to instruction from now on, and that she should fuck off. She peels her jaw off the floor and does just that, leaving the weary, disappointed Butcher to get on with a job he clearly sees as a distraction.

See last note. Obviously none of this ever happened, but I may have been thinking about the dead rent boy when I came up with Swingwing's transgression in the Get Some storyline.

The others are in a similar malaise. Mother's Milk is attempting to clean up one of the Capitol's worst ghettoes, and every much swimming uphill. The Female is working as a Mafia enforcer. The Frenchman is starting fights in coffee shops. These intros give us a good look at their abilities, but we can tell they'd rather be about their true vocation- none more so than Butcher.

In fact he was the only one. I recall that MM actually said something about youth work, which made more sense for him than some sort of ghetto vigilantism.

They get their wish when their employers get in touch. We can see that this is not a decision that's been taken lightly- Butcher clearly inspires deep suspicion and paranoia among his superiors- but there seems to be little choice. First up: a new recruit.

Again, Butcher made the running here, but there's a vestige of the "employers' concerns" idea in the scene with Rayner warily scanning the Boys' file.

Wee Hughie is as far removed from this nightmarish shadow-world as could be imagined. It's a beautiful evening, he's at the fun fair in Glasgow, and the girl he's been seeing for a few weeks now- the girl he's beginning to think might be The One- has just blurted out that she loves him, the first time that either of them has used the L-word. They're holding each others, staring in such awestruck delight that neither notices the commotion in the background- when a superhero punches a supervillain clean through Hughie's girl. Sheer bad luck, some epic battle of the titans spilling over into the fun fair, and Hughie's left holding the severed arms with the rest of the lassie squashed flat between the supervillain and a concrete wall. For a long time, all the lad can do is stare into space.

Although it would take them down very different paths, the common theme in Hughie's and Butcher's origins- the dead woman- leaves me feeling a little uncomfortable now. I was determined to make Becky Butcher as unforgettable as possible, just to avoid the usual lifeless cypher that results when such a character is created, and I like to think she could very much stand on her own two feet- but I never really took a proper look at Robin. Not good. No cigar.

This is exactly the kind of thing that the Boys are keeping an eye out for, and it's not long before Butcher pays the near-comatose Hughie a visit. He drops all the right hints, promises Hughie a chance at revenge- and at preventing things like this happening to other people- and pretty soon we're off to Washington. Butcher seems interested in Hughie in an oddly fatherly way- he curtails his usual cynicism and brutal humor around the kid, at least for a while.

No he doesn't.

Back in the States, Hughie is introduced to the rest of the team and the world they inhabit. He's understandably freaked out, and he doesn't like the idea of working for the US government at all, but as well as the thought of revenge he's downright fascinated: this is a world he never knew existed, and Butcher is giving him a guided tour. Pretty soon he's in.

Or willing to give it a trial run, at any rate.

The first storyline is pretty simple, designed to give Hughie- and us- as broad an introduction as possible to The Boys and their world. The team investigate a superteam who've been frequenting a super-brothel in downtown DC- a tricky operation, with the place catering to several well known political figures, whose appetites for the bizarre are well served by the super-hookers working there. Butcher can't just tear the place apart, as the resulting scandal would be all over the papers. So in they go, quiet and sneaky and- when the time comes- fighting very, very dirty indeed.

The brothel aspect turned out rather differently, with no politicians involved and the hookers being considerably less than super, much to their own discomfort. Indeed, this made up just one small part of Teenage Kix' transgressions, and Butcher's own motives and angle of attack were markedly different.

The reason the Boys are after this particular group is that its members have been speaking out on numerous political issues, the kind of stuff the government would rather they shut up about. This is a typical Boys operation; requiring covert surveillance, blackmail and coercion. Things go pear-shaped when the group discover they're being spied on, and the resulting fight sees Hughie- not used to his newfound strength at all- actually kill one of the superheroes.

Teenage Kix had no political agenda, but their confrontation with our heroes came about broadly along these lines. Of course, now we know how they found out who was doing the spying.

There then follows a superhero funeral, a typically overblown affair with endless speeches praising the merits of the deceased, and promises of justice descending on his killers. This is not good, the last thing

Butcher wants is some super-jihad against his team, and his bosses don't want any attention directed at them at all. Fortunately, enough dirt has been accumulated from the brothel to see that the super-group shut up about their fallen comrade, and talk the rest of the super-community out of some team-up to find the culprits. It's still a close-run thing, and Butcher is not pleased. Any kind of sustained conflict involving the Boys would lead to public exposure, and if it gets out that the government has a team dedicated to the control- and culling- of superheroes, heads will roll. And Butcher needs the Boys around for a while yet.

Way, way off. The dynamic of the Boys-CIA-Vought relationship still had a long way to go. In fact, I note that the very notion of the supes being backed by a corporation doesn't appear here at all.

By the end of the first story Wee Hughie is thoroughly disenchanted and ready to quit, so appalled is he by the filthy tricks he's seen pulled and the immorality of what he's now required to do. Butcher talks him into staying, however, playing on his fascination with the new life he's found, and also telling Hughie about his own motivation- the grotesque death of his wife, and the hatred for heroes it inspired. And that's why I'm supposed to stay, asks the bewildered Hughie. "That," replies Butcher, "and I always wanted a little brother."

A line that came to define their relationship, and that went all the way to the end of the story.

By now you've realized that the world of *The Boys* is not a pleasant one- minus superheroes it's pretty much our own- and that the characters themselves are not very nice at all (with the exception of Hughie). I should point out that I intend to play them all as reasonably sympathetic, with even Butcher capable of occasional displays of humanity. Their opponents will generally be revealed as the worst kind of hypocrites; professing to fight for truth and justice while secretly indulging in endless orgies of drugs, crime, filth and perversion. This "fighting dirty to catch the real scum" aspect, and the generally outrageous nature of the book, is what I hope will sustain interest in *The Boys*.

And, you know, characters and plot and all that stuff, too.

So that's issues 1-6. Not only is there no mention of Vought (or indeed the very notion of corporation vs. government), but there's no Seven, no Annie January, no Jamie the Hamster, no Rayner or Monkey, no Janine... (not that Janine ever had a particularly big role to play, except in Black Holes, I suppose).

LATER STORIES

The Fucker (working title)

Oh, charming. More tea, Vicar?

A superhero confides in his psychiatrist that he can't stop having sex, generally with whatever comes to hand. His cyborg teammate, the shrink's cat, a melon- nothing is safe. This is all grist to the mill of the Boys' blackmail machine, of course, and it isn't long before Butcher and co. take an interest.

Obviously this would become Get Some, featuring Tek-Knight and his little problem.

This story will introduce another regular character, The Legend. Butcher takes Hughie into a comic book store, explaining that the comics are a sanitized version of what goes on in super-reality, published to distract the public from some uncomfortable truths. Pointing to several of the comics on the racks, Butcher gives Hughie a rundown on who's fucking who, who's gay, who's had a sex change, who's in the Klan. Butcher has the inside scoop, and the man he gets it from is the Legend.

Seem to recall that scene went pretty much as described here.

A strange little man in his seventies with a ridiculous Hitler moustache and highly selective memory loss, the Legend lives under this particular store where he indulges his tastes for whiskey and hookers- the latter in an ongoing attempt to resurrect his permanently flaccid penis. When the superhero comic boom took off, the Legend is the guy who was brought in to oversee publication. He was in charge of cleaning up reality for the books that would see print, and so he had- and continues to have- the dirt on everyone. This guy has a million stories to tell, and every one of them is appalling.

One of my favorite characters, if only for the commentary he inspired on the less creator-friendly aspects of the American comic book industry. 'Nuff said, true believer.

The Other Fifth Member

The story of Wee Hughie's predecessor, the original fifth member of the Boys. Something went badly wrong on the last operation prior to the team's suspension, and Hughie- naturally curious- discovers that no one really wants to talk about what happened, Butcher least of all.

Obviously this is less a "later story" than a huge chunk of the Boys' history: but I always leave enough wriggle room when I'm writing outlines so that I can fill in any details that occur later. Truth be told, I loathe trying to summarize long and complex storylines in these accursed proposals; whenever I'm forced to. I find myself wanting to simply say- we both know I can do it, just give me the fucking job...

Butcher's story

An origin story with big bloody teeth, this one takes us through 25 years of brutality, treachery and very bleak humor. Beginning in 1982's Falklands War, where we see Butcher blooded as a Royal Marine in the vicious battle to retake the islands, the story moves on through his various black ops and the ghastly death of his wife, culminating in his growing hatred of superheroes- and his determination to do something about them.

See what I mean?

THE LAST STORY (THE BIG SECRET)

There's an ongoing plot thread running right through *The Boys*: the story of what Butcher has been up to all this time. I've designed the book so that this story can appear either at the book's natural conclusion, as with *Preacher*, or when sales kill it stone dead anyway, as with *Hitman*.

Although to be honest, I became more and more convinced after I turned in the outline that I was onto something here, and that the book would last the course without any real trouble. Not that I told anyone that at the time...

The Big Secret is this: Butcher is out to destroy all superhuman life on the planet. He's working with a government scientist (another hate-filled malcontent with a private grudge) who's designed a virus designed to kill every superhuman who comes in contact with it. The problem, of course, is that people have superpowers for a variety of reasons. Some have accidents, some have them at birth, some have

THE BOYS #66 COMMENTARY

by Garth Ennis

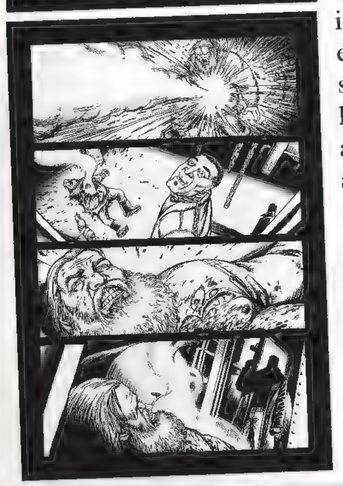
(This one-off commentary was originally written for a number of comics news sites.)

PAGE ONE

Bit of conjecture on the side-effects of depleted uranium ammunition on its users here. I've always been fascinated by the notion of military personnel being issued weapons and equipment that isn't up to the job, or that's just plain dangerous to the user- aircraft structurally prone to stalling, or pistols that blow up in the owner's hand- but D.U. seems to be one step beyond.

There used to be a wrecked Iraqi tank sitting on Pier 86 next to the *Intrepid* museum, over on New York's west side- it had been brought back from the 1991 Gulf War and displayed with the holes made by American shells there for all to see. Eventually it was removed, apparently (I was told at the time) because the hull still retained a possibly dangerous level of radiation from the D.U. shell that had gutted it.

"Like the place at the end of *Terminator 2* but with everything switched off", I told Russ. Bit lazy, but it's just a location so it's hardly plagiarism. Unlike, for instance, the instruction to "make him like that Barracuda guy in *The Punisher*" that I'm told showed up in someone's script not so long ago. Dearie me…!



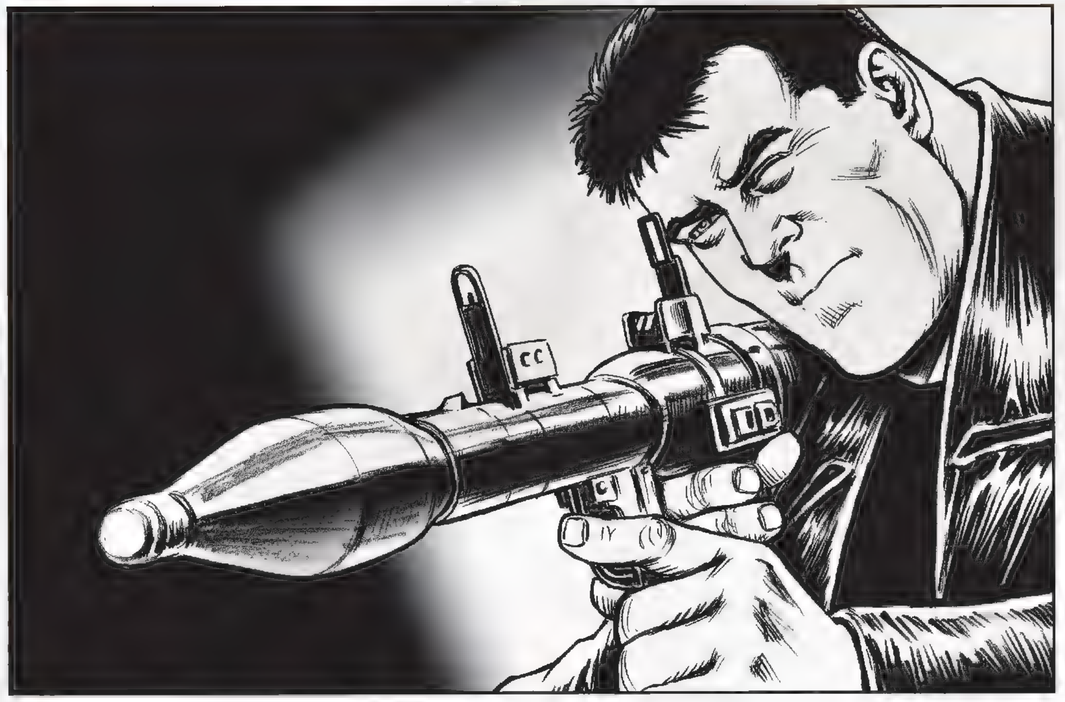
PAGE TWO

The earlier *Terminator* reference sparked that last line. Why not, I'm sure Butcher watched it at some stage, on a plane or whatever. Altogether now: "I know now vy you cwy- but it is somethink I can nevah **doooo...**"

PAGE THREE

In panel 3 we get the standard Squaddie's complaint about Tankie arrogance, probably since tanks first appeared (that's Grunt and Tanker in US parlance, incidentally). A friend of mine who spent twelve years in the British army told me the infantry's antidote: wait 'til you're on exercise, and when a tank goes by lash it with machine-gunfire from stem to stern. The crew sit inside hearing this stuff ricocheting off their hull and thinking just what realistic training this is, and in the meantime all their kit that they've slung from the turret- packs, sleeping bags, food and booze- is getting blasted to oblivion.

Speaking of this sort of thing, I recently met a US Army officer who'd transferred from tanks to infantry because he hated tanks. He corrected himself- "No, not tanks, tankers. I hate their attitude. They basically believe "there's always a bigger hammer". They think nothing of firing a D.U. penetrator from the main gun at single insurgent, just to see what a 120mm round will do to a human body." Which immediately put in me in mind of *The Boys #65*, but I decided to keep that to myself.



PAGE FOUR

Bloody hell, it's Butcher- although you knew that from about panel 2 on page one, because no one else in comics sounds like him. I sometimes think you could get away with *anything* if you spoke in that accent- a theory that the big man will spend the next six issues attempting to prove.

Bazooka is a word that seems to have fallen out of favour in recent years, people preferring LAW or RPG. But in the World War Two era (and for kids raised in the succeeding 30-40 years, such as Butcher and myself) it was widely known. It refers to a shoulder-launched rocket that was issued to American troops for the purpose of destroying German tanks, which it usually failed to do. There's a very realistic demonstration of its use towards the end of *Saving Private Ryan*, wherein Tom Sizemore encounters a good deal of frustration while engaging a Tiger tank. A bloke in *Band Of Brothers* has better luck, if only because his officer forces him to wait for the target to get suicidally close.

PAGES FIVE-SEVEN

Nothing beats New York in the snow- for the first 24 hours, at any rate. "I'm gonna walk," said a friend of mine last year before a twenty block midnight hike in about 18 inches of the stuff, "How often do you get to see the city like this?" Too true. Of course, the subsequent ten days of grey slush and icy sidewalks are no fun at all. I once saw a bloke disappear into one of those pools of slop that develop on the really badly-maintained, misshapen corners, where the drain blocks straightaway and the banks of snow create a flooded pit. He was up almost instantly, screaming and spitting, slathered in grime and cigarette butts and dogshit and whatever else was floating around in there- but for one incredible moment his *entire body* was under the surface.

But that first day, when the sky is silver-white and the city basks in impossible silence, and then night comes and the clouds reflect the golden glow from beneath- that's truly something. Time to relax and reflect. Time to think about that guy whose head you kicked off and whose ghastly spurtings have been haunting your dreams ever since.

Some people don't realize *The Boys* is set over only a couple of years, roughly 2006-8, no matter how many hints I drop in. There's a tendency to think that these 60+ issue epics take place in real time, when in fact they couldn't possibly. *Preacher*, *Transmetropolitan*, *Y: The Last Man*- what, about 2-3 years each? Tops?

PAGES EIGHT-ELEVEN

What does a French lunatic do when he gets his arm blasted off? Why, dress up like Napoleon, of course. Not that old Boney ever lost a limb, but the opportunity to do the famous arm-in-coat pose was too good to miss.

Hughie's skills in command and self-assertion are certainly not all they might be, but if you will spend months moping about committing cold-blooded murder you're never going to get anywhere, are you? In fact, our hero's total inability to learn from his mistakes and change his ways will eventually stand him in good stead- though he probably doesn't see it that way right now.

No doubt Hughie's tendency to mope and turn inwards is a source of frustration to many readers, all used to comic heroes who learn from experience and develop into fully-rounded characters ready to handle anything. In my experience this is like no one who's ever existed in real life; even the most capable people either maintain or eventually return to their essential flaws. I doubt any twenty-something lad unused to trauma and violence could simply absorb it straightaway, and if he did become hardened or inured it would be as a different, less sensitive person. In other words, Hughie's bizarre triumph is that he remains Hughie.

If it's self-assertion you're after, just go back to page four.

PAGES TWELVE-FOURTEEN

The Vought-American executives generally- and Stillwell and Bradley in particular- exhibit the kind of behaviour with which I imagine Wall Street responded to the Occupy movement: cool-headed observation, rational analysis, no sense of alarm. When time, money and power are on your side, why get upset? I'm speaking here of the CEOs and greater demons, not the little savages who bawl numbers at each other on the floor of the exchange- I'm sure they reacted with a good deal more vitriol to the ragged band encamped outside.

Little bit of corporate manure from CEO Brewster here, particularly regarding the use of the word family. It's a source of constant amazement to me that people swallow the idea that their job is anything like a family- "You're part of the Megalo-Omnicorp family now", etc etc. I've seen intelligent, rational adults react with amazement when the dreadful day came and their "family" gave them the boot. As has been said, show me a family where Dad eats first.

(My other least favourite bullshit-isms are probably *you need to*, in the sense of a thinly and pathetically disguised command, and *we want to work together*, meaning we don't.)

As for Stillwell's comments on Wikileaks, I do sometimes wonder just how much people are prepared to sit still for- or how much shit they're prepared to eat, to put it another way. This was at the forefront of my mind for a good deal of the Bush era, although there wasn't anything particularly new about the concept: the Irangate scandal of 1987 at least forced Ronald Reagan to publicly apologise to the American people, but his vice-president was deemed innocent of any wrongdoing and elected to power a year later.

Lest this be thought an anti-American screed, remember that many British people gave themselves a good old pat on the back for the various protests and marches conducted during the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War. Two years later, with a chance to decisively censure Tony Blair for his wrongdoing, they gave him a parliamentary majority that either of his predecessors would have killed for. But let's agree,

as Stillwell and Bradley do, that there's a limit beyond which public opinion simply will not accompany you.

I hope…

PAGES FIFTEEN-EIGHTEEN

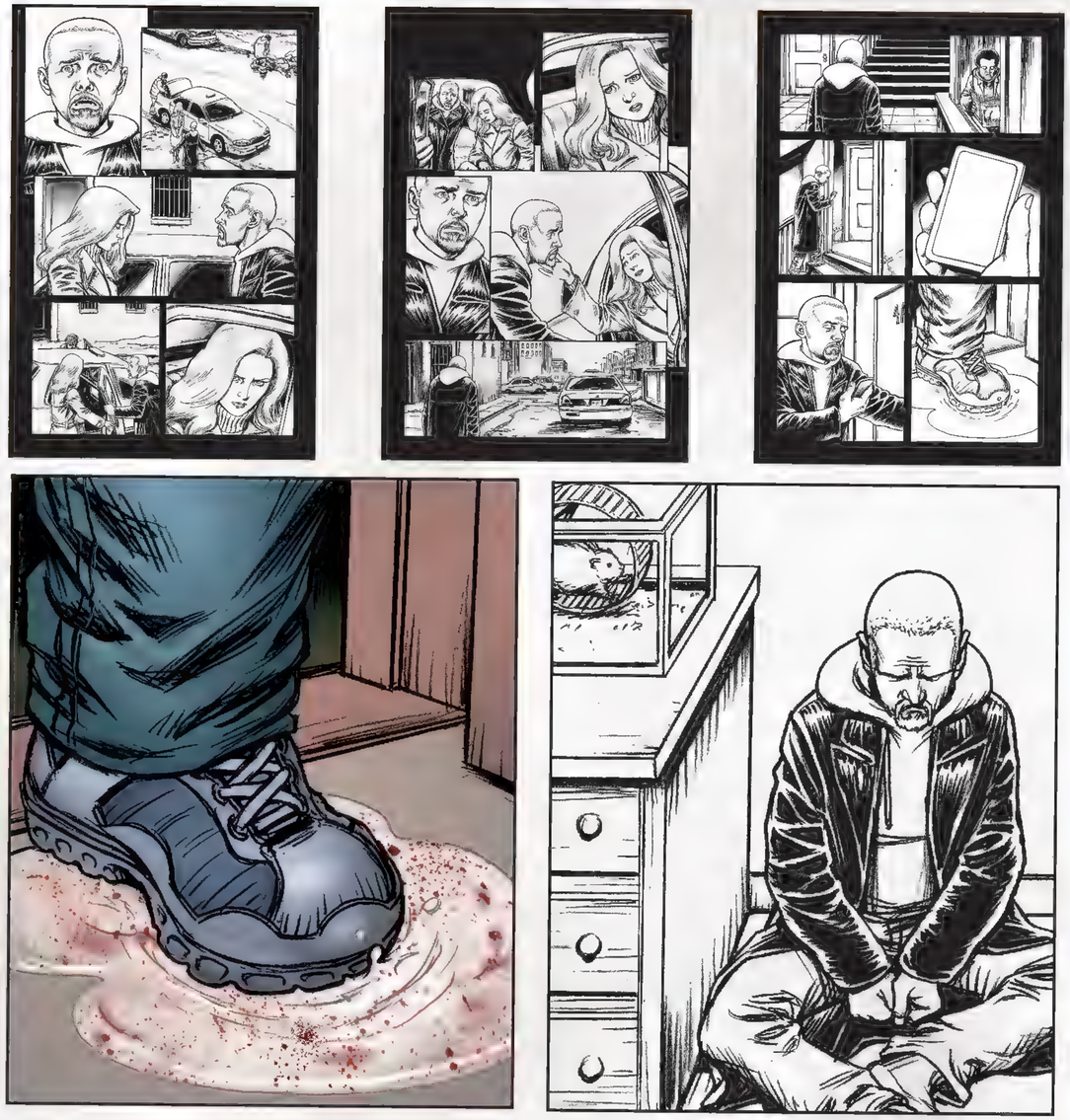
Butcher does his thing. You can just imagine him in #56, noting the demand for promotion outside Dr. Peculiar's, and thinking- y*ou reckon you're being smart, but this will come back to bite you in the arse, my son.* And then, an issue later, noticing how easy it was for Hughie to piss Frenchie off completely by accident- Bingo. Ah, Billy. My all-time favourite creation.

This is as good a time as any to talk about Russ Braun's absolute mastery of his art (although I do love his take on Butcher; there's a headshot from his sketchbook on my office wall that I put up to keep me focused while writing #60-72). His story-telling is flawless, his characterization is constant- there's never any weird variation in any one person's face- and his ability to "move the camera" so things remain clear but never get staid is a marvel in itself. But beyond that, Russ has the ability to *think his way into the script*, as I like to put it: he never ignores background detail or deems characters that aren't talking in a particular panel irrelevant. He knows, say, that X has to look a certain way because he's thinking about Y, or that A's got to be smiling because in a moment he'll be doing B. Too many artists omit details of script direction because it doesn't occur to them why someone has to have the expression they do. But not the guys who take the time to think their way in.

A skill like this gets little attention or praise because- like good acting- it's supposed to be invisible. I'd love to be able to claim that I discovered Russ personally and was the only one to recognize his genius, but in fact he's been drawing comics on and off for twenty years. Such a quiet, deft approach to art will often go unnoticed while flashier talents bask in the limelight, but for sheer storytelling ability I think there are few to touch the man. In that regard alone, I'd put him in the same class as Steve Dillon.

PAGES NINETEEN & TWENTY

Faint heart ne'er won fair lady, my little Scots chum.



PAGES TWENTY-ONE & TWENTY-TWO

"Come on, Tony," I exhorted our colourist when I saw the few paltry red specks he'd initially produced at the bottom of page 21, "get a bit more blood into that cum." Not the strangest colouring direction I've given Mr. Aviña during his tenure on the book, but not the kind of thing you encounter working on *Batgirl*, either. Still, Tony manfully rose to the task and gave us what we needed. The results are there for all to see.

NEXT ISSUE: The last word on creators' rights, courtesy of The Legend.

THE BOYS 71
GARTH ENNIS

PAGE ONE

1.

The main observation deck of the Empire State Building, evening. Hughie has managed to impale himself on a couple of those dreadful inward-curving spikes that run along the top of the security fence, one gone clean through his thigh and the other his left forearm, so that he's hanging upsidedown and roaring in pain. He's managed to grab hold of another spike with his good hand and pull himself up a little, so that at least his injuries aren't taking all the weight- but he's losing a lot of blood, it's soaking his clothes and sliding down the bars and wall or dripping down to pool on the deck below him. He's nearest. Butcher lies a few yards behind him with his head propped against the outside wall of the gift store, arms limp at his side, legs splayed. He's facing Hughie with a dull frown on his face, only just come to.

Hughie: **AAAAAAAAHHH! GOD, GOD, JESUS CHRIST! AAAAAAAAH!!**

Butcher: YOU THINK THAT'S BAD—

" " I CAN'T FEEL FUCK ALL BELOW ME NECK.

Title: **THE BLOODY DOORS OFF** conclusion

PAGE TWO

1.

Hughie only, gasping in agony as he tries to hold himself up, blood pouring from his wounds.

Hughie: **AW FUCK, HELP ME, GET ME DOWN...!**

Butcher: SNAP THE BAR, YOU TIT.

2.

Butcher looks dully up at us, slightly weary look about him even now.

Off: WH-WH-WH--?

Butcher: THAT'S WHAT'S HOLDIN' YOU UP THERE. SNAP IT.

Off: BUT IT **REALLY HURTS...!**

Butcher: IT'S GONNA HURT A FUCKSIGHT MORE IF YOU DON'T.

3.

Hughie howls in pain and takes hold of the bar stuck through his leg.

Hughie: **AAAAH! AAH-AAH-AAH-AAH-AAAAH!**

4.

Close up as his hand snaps the bar, just below his leg.

5.

Hughie hits the deck in front of Butcher in a bloody heap, left arm ripping off its own bar and spraying blood. He gasps at the shock, about a foot of bar protruding from each side of his thigh.

Hughie: **WHUHHH!!**

Butcher: THERE YOU GO.

PAGE THREE

1.

Hughie stares at the bar protruding from his leg in pain and terror, blood pooling around the wound. Butcher raises an eye.

Hughie: OH GOD—OH **FUCK–!**

Butcher: I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK O' THAT, I THINK YOU MIGHT'VE NICKED THE FEMORAL. TIE YER BELT ROUND IT QUICK AS YOU CAN, YEAH?

2.

Hughie struggles to do just that. Blood squirts from his left arm and the hand isn't working properly, the fingers won't close- but he's more or less tying the belt tight. Gasping in agony throughout.

Hughie: **AAAAAAAAAHH, MY HAND...!**

Butcher: THAT AIN'T THE BAD ONE, MATE, THAT AIN'T GONNA KILL YOU. COME ON, TIE IT UP TIGHT.

3.

Hughie slumps back against the wall below the security fence, exhausted by the effort. He's about three yards from Butcher.

Butcher: THERE, HOW'S THAT?

Hughie: FUCK.

" " AW FUCK.

" " FUCK, I CAN HARDLY MOVE.

4.

Hughie feebly holds up his phone- screen shattered, ruined. He can barely even hold it.

Hughie: **SHITE…**

Off: OH, TOO BAD, MY SON. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE BOTH STUCK.

5.

View past Butcher's detonator unit, lying about ten yards away, red light still blinking. Hughie follows Butcher's gaze to it as he smiles.

Butcher: STILL, LUCKY FOR YOU THAT LANDED THE WRONG WAY UP, EH?

PAGE FOUR

1.

Hughie lowers his head and starts weeping, miserable, eyes tight shut. Butcher grimaces.

Butcher: AW, NOW DON'T BLOODY START THAT…!

2.

Hughie only, turning to gaze at us through his tears.

Off: YOU KNOW I CAN'T STAND THAT, IF THERE'S—

Hughie: HOW COULD YOU?

" " HOW COULD YOU DO IT?

3.

Butcher grimaces, bleak, too tired to argue about this. Hughie stares at him.

Butcher: I TOLD YOU. THERE'S NO POINT GOIN' OVER AN' OVER IT AGAIN, JUST BE GRATEFUL I BOLLOCKSED IT UP…

Hughie: I'M NO' TALKIN' ABOUT THAT.

4.

Butcher only, caught off guard a little, grim.

Off: M.M.. FRENCHIE AN' HER.

" " **HOW COULD YOU…?**

5.

Hughie watches as Butcher looks grim, weary.

Butcher: AH, FUCK.

" " I NEVER WANTED IT TO END THE WAY IT DID. I THOUGHT I'D GOT YOU ALL OUT O' THE WAY, YOU'D JUST…

Hughie: DIE ALONG WI' EVERYBODY ELSE?

6.

Butcher smiles sadly at us.

Butcher: KNOWIN' NOTHIN'.

PAGE FIVE

1.

Hughie looks bleakly at Butcher, who grimaces.

Hughie: D'YOU KEN VAS BLED TO DEATH IN THAT PLACE? THE POLICE REPORT SAID HE'D TAKEN HALF AN HOUR TO DIE?

Butcher: AH, THE POOR CUNT.

" " I THOUGHT THE THIRD ONE DONE FOR HIM, I REALLY DID.

2.

Hughie only, anguished.

Off: BUT ANY ONE OF 'EM COULDA STOPPED ME, WITH WHAT THEY KNEW. THEY HAD TO GO.

Hughie: BUT IT WAS **THEM…!**

3.

Hughie watches Butcher lower his gaze, thoughtful.

Butcher: YEAH, I KNOW.

" " I KILLED ME FIRST MAN AT SEVENTEEN, HUGHIE. DONE A LOT MORE SINCE THEN. AN' EVERY TIME I GET THAT FEELIN' I TOLD YOU ABOUT, LIKE I'M WATCHIN' FROM SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY.

" " IT AIN'T LIKE I DON'T KNOW IT'S WRONG, BUT… IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM, OR SOMETHIN'. AN' IT'S WHAT LETS ME GET THE JOB DONE WITHOUT WORRYIN' ABOUT IT LATER.

4.

He smiles, bleak. Hughie is miserable.

Butcher: I DUNNO, IT PROBABLY JUST MEANS I'M SOME SORT O' PSYCHOPATH…

Hughie: THE JOB. FUCKSAKE.

" " AN' I WAS MEANT TO TALK YOU OUTTA GOIN' THROUGH WI' THE PLAN, IS THAT RIGHT?

5.

Butcher smiles at us- no ire here, he's being honest, and a little sad.

Off: 'CAUSE I SORT O' DOUBT YER WEE BROTHER STOPPED YOU DOIN' WHATEVER IT WAS PHYSICALLY…

Butcher: SPOT ON. HE WAS JUST A DECENT FUCKIN' BLOKE, SAME AS YOU.

PAGE SIX

1.
Hughie's fascinated in spite of himself. Butcher muses.

Hughie: SO YOU PLANNED THIS OUT, RIGHT FROM THE BLOODY START, HAVIN' SOMEONE TO--

Butcher: NAH, IT WAS JUST AN IDEA AT THE BACK O' ME HEAD. SORT O' CAME TOGETHER THE SAME TIME I WAS THINKIN' ABOUT DOIN' THE SUPES.

" " I READ THE FILE ON YOU WHEN I WENT TO SEE MONKEY, BUT IT WASN'T 'TIL I MET YOU I STARTED TO THINK… HERE, THIS COULD BE HIM.

2.

Hughie stares as Butcher grins at him.

Butcher: YOU AN' YER BLEEDIN' MORAL STREAK.

3.

Hughie can't figure this. Butcher shrugs.

Hughie: BUT YOU WERE ALWAYS TELLIN' ME TO TOUGHEN UP, AN' GET USED TO HITTIN' FOLK AN' ALL…

Butcher: YEAH, BUT THAT WAS FOR SURVIVAL. AN' I DID A FUCKSIGHT MORE'N JUST TELL YOU; IT WAS ME TIPPED OFF TEENAGE KIX WHO'D DONE THE DIRTY ON 'EM, AN' I LEFT YOU TO IT WITH SWINGWING AN' ALL.

4.

Hughie stares at us in diebelief.

Hughie: **WHAT…?**

Off: AN' NONE OF IT MADE A BLIND BIT O' DIFFERENCE. YOU STAYED YERSELF NO MATTER WHAT I DONE.

" " FUCK, I DOUBT YOU EVEN LIKED KILLIN' A-TRAIN ALL THAT MUCH, EVEN WITH WHAT YOU WERE AFTER THE TOSSER FOR…

5.

Butcher, amused.

Off: I FUCKIN' **HATED** DOIN' THAT--!

Butcher: THERE YOU ARE.

" " I'D MORE OR LESS GIVEN UP ON YOU STOPPIN' ME AT ALL, D'YOU KNOW THAT? I WAS THINKIN' THE OTHER DAY, SHIT, MAYBE I SHOULD'VE GONE FOR SOMEONE MORE LIKE MESELF—BUT THEN SOMEONE LIKE ME WOULDN'T'VE **WANTED** TO STOP ME, WOULD THEY?

" " IN THE END YOU'RE JUST LIKE LENNY WAS. A GOOD LITTLE BLOKE WHO CAN'T HELP BEIN' REASONABLE.

PAGE SEVEN

1.

Hughie looks bleak. Butcher grimaces with disgust.

Hughie: I WAS GONNA TRY AN' FIGHT YOU, LIKE. I EVEN WENT TO M.M.'S MUM, I DRANK MOTHER'S MILK'S MOTHER'S MILK…

Butcher: JESUS--!

Hughie: BUT I EVEN MADE A PIG'S EAR O' THAT, DIDN'T I?

2.

Hughie thinks about it.

Hughie: I DUNNO.

" " MAYBE IF I HADN'T BEEN WHO I AM… WELL, YOU MIGHT NOT'VE WANTED TO SAVE MY LIFE JUST NOW.

3.

Butcher grins at him. Hughie cringes a bit.

Butcher: AN' WE WOULDN'T BE WHERE WE ARE NOW. VERY TRUE.

Hughie: **FUCK…!**

" " I JUST—I'M SITTIN' HERE TALKIN' AWAY TO YOU LIKE NOTHIN'S HAPPENED, AN' —I JUST CAN'T GET IT INTO MY HEAD THAT THIS IS WHO YOU'VE TURNED OUT TO **BE**…

4.

Butcher is bleak, but pretty relaxed.

Butcher: 'FRAID SO, MY SON.

" ": THEN AGAIN, I WAS THE ONE PUT THE BOYS BACK TOGETHER AFTER MALLORY LOST HIS BOTTLE. I MADE 'EM WHAT THEY WERE MEANT TO BE.

" " I GOT VOGELBAUM WORKIN' ON FUCKIN' SUPE-SEEKIN' MISSILES; THE HOMELANDER AN' HIS MATES WOULD'VE CAUSED A LOT MORE BOTHER IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR ME.

5.

He smiles warmly, knowingly at Hughie- who stares back, can't fit this in his head.

Butcher: YOU NEED BLOKES LIKE ME, HUGHIE.

" " IT'S WHAT WE GET UP TO IN OUR SPARE TIME YOU'VE GOTTA WORRY ABOUT.

6.

Long shot on both.

Hughie: JESUS, WHERE THE FUCK'RE THE COPS?

Butcher: I SAID TERRORISTS. THAT'S THE MAGIC WORD.

" " I RECKON WE'LL BE WAITIN' A BIT YET.

PAGE EIGHT

1.

Bradley in her hotel room, on her phone. The TV news is on, presumably muted. She's just come in and kicked off her shoes, loosened her blouse, and is now pouring two miniature vodkas from the minibar into a glass.

Bradley: … SO, CALL ME BACK.

" " I DON'T KNOW WHY I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU. TODAY WAS AWFUL, I REALLY NEED TO UNWIND.

" " CALL ME.

2.

View past her as she pours the vodkas, glancing at the blond news anchor on the TV.

3.

Suddenly Stillwell is on TV, surrounded by reporters as he leaves Congress. A caption reads BREAKING NEWS and LIVE. Nearest us Bradley's hands drop the bottles and the glass together, spasming in panic.

4.

Pull back as Bradley snatches up the remote, points it. On TV Stillwell heads for a black towncar, cops keeping the press back.

Jag: -- CAN'T MAKE ANY COMMENT ON MY TESTIMONY TO CONGRESS…

Jag 2: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT CAUSED YOUR CHANGE OF HEART?

Jag: I'M AFRAID I HAVE NO COMMENT AT THIS TIME. I'M SORRY.

Jag 3: ALTHOUGH STILLWELL REMAINED **TIGHT-LIPPED**, IT **HAS BEEN CONFIRMED** THAT AN **EXTRAORDINARY SESSION** OF THE COMMITTEE **WAS CONVENED THIS EVENING**…

5.

Bradley pointing the remote at us, forgotten it's in her hand, frozen like a deer in the headlights. Absolutely no idea what's going on.

Jag: APPARENTLY—ACCORDING TO **SOURCES WITHIN THE SENATE**—AS A RESULT OF THE WITNESS **CONTACTING A SENIOR CONGRESSIONAL FIGURE** WITH A VIEW TO **SUPPLYING FRESH EVIDENCE**…

Bradley: WHAT?

PAGE NINE

1.

Close up. Her eyes almost bulge from her skull, her jaw drops. She gets it now, all right.

Jag: WHILE **REPORTS** FROM THE COMMITTEE SESSION REMAIN **LIGHT ON DETAIL IN SOME AREAS**, ONE ASPECT OF JAMES STILLWELL'S EVIDENCE SEEMS **CRYSTAL-CLEAR**: HIS IDENTIFYING **VOUGHT-AMERICAN SENIOR EXECUTIVE JESSICA BRADLEY** AS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE **BREAKDOWN IN CONTROL** THAT LED TO THE **DISASTROUS EVENTS OF LAST NOVEMEBER**…

2.

Bradley drops the remote and falls to her knees. Her own face appears on the TV, a still taken from her disastrous arrival at Congress in #68- not where the guy attacked her, just a wary close-up immediately prior to that.

Jag: THE **SAME CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES** HAVE REVEALED THAT STILLWELL CITED A DATE **EARLY LAST YEAR**, WHEN HE HANDED OVER **DIRECT OPERATIONAL CONTROL** OF THE CORPORATION'S SUPERHUMAN DEVELOPMENT DIVISION **TO BRADLEY**—A DATE FOR WHICH HE PROVIDED **DOCUMENTED PROOF.**

" " STILLWELL **ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY** FOR BRADLEY'S APPOINTMENT, BUT **DID SAY** THAT HE **SPECIFICALLY CAUTIONED HER** TO **WATCH** THE VARIOUS SUPERTEAMS—ADVISING **EXTRA VIGILANCE** REGARDING THE SEVEN AND THE HOMELANDER **IN PARTICULAR**. MS. BRADLEY, HE SAID, **SADLY CHOSE** TO **IGNORE HIS ADVICE** AND PURSUE HER **OWN AGENDA**.

3.

Close up as Bradley sags forward, shaking, staring at the floor, barely getting her hands braced to stop herself falling.

Jag: WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO **WHY** THE PREMIER SUPERTEAM WAS DEEMED **WORTH WATCHING**, STILLWELL REPLIED THAT THE SEVEN WERE SIMPLY VOUGHT'S **LARGEST SOURCE** OF REVENUE.

" " HE WAS **THEN ASKED** IF HE BELIEVED THAT **HAD HE HIMSELF** CONTINUED IN THE EXECUTIVE ROLE, EVENTS WOULD HAVE **GONE DIFFERENTLY**—BUT **DECLINED TO ANSWER**, SAYING THAT HIS **OWN JUDGMENTS** WOULD BE **INAPPROPRIATE**.

4.

Close up as Bradley freezes again- this is the one that seals her fate.

Jag: AND WE'VE **JUST HEARD** THAT A **SPOKESMAN** FOR VOUGHT-AMERICAN, SPEAKING FROM THE COMPANY'S **NEW YORK OFFICES**, HAS **PRAISED** WHAT HE CALLED STILLWELL'S **PROFOUND ACT OF CONSCIENCE**...

Jag 2: YES—AH—LET ME JUST SAY THAT LOYALTY TO A CO-WORKER IS CERTAINLY ADMIRABLE, BUT AT VOUGHT WE EXPECT A LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY THAT EXTENDS BEYOND COMPANY POLITICS. WE REMAIN **COMPLETELY COMMITTED** TO THE SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH SURROUNDING LAST YEAR'S TRAGIC EVENTS, AND WE HOPE THAT TODAY'S STATEMENT BY A TRUSTED EXECUTIVE OFFICER WILL SERVE TO REITERATE THAT FACT.

5.

Closer, maybe just her staring eyes, suddenly on the brink of insanity.

Jag: THE BOTTOM LINE IS: AT VOUGHT-AMERICAN, WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BOARDROOM **DOES NOT** STAY IN THE BOARDROOM.

Bln YOU'VE HAD YOUR EYE ON ME FOR **NINE YEARS?**

PAGE TEN

1.

Flashback to #40, Bradley and Stillwell on the roof. Not too close.

Bln: YOU WERE... WAITING FOR ME TO REACH A PARTICULAR POSITION, OR...?

Bln 2: ONE APPROPRIATE TO YOUR POTENTIAL. AS INDICATED BY YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND GENERAL APTITUDE.

" " BUT YOU GOT THERE SOME TIME AGO; I'VE SIMPLY BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO APPROACH ME IN PERSON.

2.

Flashback to #59, Bradley smiling in surprise as she gets the good news by phone.

Bln: YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T BE QUITE SO QUICK TO DESPAIR, MS. BRADLEY. DON'T FORGET YOU'RE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TEAM.

" " OF THE VOUGHT-AMERICAN FAMILY.

3.

Flashback to #61- Stillwell addressing Team Titanic, Bradley listening, surprised.

Bln: THE SECOND IS TO PROTECT MS. BRADLEY. SHE IS AS IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF THIS COMPANY AS ANY OTHER SENIOR OFFICER.

4.

#61 again, the two of them having brunch.

Bln: HMM.

" " I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD TELL YOU, MS. BRADLEY.

5.

Out of flashback as Bradley takes hold of her hair with both hands, staring insanely at the floor, spit sliding from her teeth.

Bln: BUT I FEEL I CAN RELAX AROUND YOU.

Bradley: **NO...!**

PAGE ELEVEN

1.

Big. Bradley grits her teeth and drools spit, starts tearing her hair out at the roots- she pulls like mad, straining with all her strength, and blood starts slowly trickling from her scalp. Eyes tight shut, tormented, trying not to have to face this.

Bln: DID YOU HAVE TO COME IN PAST THAT MOB OUTSIDE? DID NO ONE INFORM YOU THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL MORE DISCRETE ENTRANCES FOR OCCASIONS LIKE THIS?

Bradley: **NO…**

Bln: THIS. IT'S THIS.

" " JESUS, I'M THE FACE OF IT NOW.

Bradley: **NO…**

Bln: TAKE MY HAND. TAKE HEART.

" " IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY.

Bradley: **NO…**

2.

Flashback to #39, the first time they met. Stillwell listening calmly.

Bln: AND FOLLOWING ON FROM THAT… CONSIDERING HOW RADICAL SOME OF THE MOVES YOU'RE GOING TO BE MAKING ARE RUMORED TO BE…

" " THEN THE MOST SENSIBLE CHOICE—AT LEAST FROM YOUR POINT OF VIEW—

3.

Flashback to same. Bradley smiles at us, one eye raised, champagne glass in hand. Little bit flirty, little bit seductive, utterly certain of herself.

Bln: WOULD BE A FALL GUY.

4.

Bradley loses it and screams the walls down, rips out both handfuls of hair, blood pouring down her face from dozens of tiny wounds. Looking down at her here as she throws her head back and howls, eyes clamped shut.

Bradley: **NNNNAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH** (off page)

PAGE TWELVE

1.

Hughie and Butcher on the deck. Last light of a gloomy winter evening.

Hughie: I DON'T SUPPOSE... YOU WANNA TELL ME WHERE YOU'VE GOT ALL THESE BLOODY BOMBS HIDDEN...?

Butcher: HAVE A LOOK ON ME PHONE.

2.

Close in. Butcher smiles darkly, amused at something. Hughie is just sad and bleak.

Butcher: THEY AIN'T GONNA GO OFF ON THEIR OWN, BUT... WELL, WHO GIVES A FUCK NOW, EH?

" " COME TO THINK OF IT, IF YOU EVER WANNA GET YER OWN BACK ON RAYNER YOU'LL FIND EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED ON THERE AN' ALL...

Hughie: I COULDN'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT RAYNER.

3.

He looks at Butcher, who evenly meets his gaze- no longer smiling, but still completely relaxed.

Hughie: ALL THIS FOR ONE WOMAN.

Butcher: YEAH.

Hughie: NOT EVEN FOR HER, FOR HER MEMORY.

Butcher: MM-HM.

4.

Butcher smiles at us, no ire in it.

Butcher: YOU DIDN'T KNOW HER, HUGHIE. YOU DUNNO WHAT SHE MEANT TO ME.

" " WHAT SHE MADE ME INTO.

5.

Hughie only, startled.

Off: IS THERE ANYTHIN' YOU WOULDN'T DO FOR BLONDIE?

PAGE THIRTEEN

1.

Both, Hughie completely thrown, Butcher amused.

Hughie: I—WHAT—

Butcher: I KNOW YOU'RE STILL SEEIN' HER.

Hughie: BUT—BUT—HOW—

Butcher: WILD GUESS.

2.

Hughie looks at us, pained.

Hughie: OH.

" " YOU'RE... YOU'RE NO' GONNA COME OUT WI' ALL SORTS O' HORRIBLE STUFF ABOUT HER, ARE YOU?

" " ' CAUSE I JUST DON'T THINK I HAVE ENOUGH MEANNESS IN ME, TO SAY AWFUL THINGS ABOUT YER WIFE...

3.

Butcher smiles calmly, amused. Hughie lowers his gaze.

Butcher: I AIN'T GONNA SAY NOTHIN' HORRIBLE.

Hughie: GOOD.

" " SHE TURNED OUT TO BE PRETTY MUCH THE EXACT OPPOSITE O' WHAT YOU SAID SHE WAS.

4.

Butcher smiles, raises an eye.

Butcher: GLAD TO HEAR IT.

" " YOU LOVE HER?

5.

Hughie looks bleak. Butcher stops smiling, raises an eye.

Hughie: I DO. I REALLY DO.

" " BUT I THINK I MIGHT BE A BIT LATE THERE, 'CAUSE I'VE FUCKED THINGS UP ABOUT AS BADLY AS I COULD'VE.

Butcher: W ELL THEN YOU'RE A FUCKIN' NOB-END, AIN'T YOU?

PAGE FOURTEEN

1.

Hughie stares at Butcher, who smiles at him.

Hughie: EH…?

Butcher: GRAB HOLD OF HER, HUGHIE.

2.

Big. Butcher only, smiling the smile of a decent, honest man. Never been more human.

Butcher: WRAP YER ARMS AROUND HER.

" " BREATHE HER IN.

3.

Big. Hughie stares at us, quietly but totally riveted. Last advice he expected to get from this particular source.

Off: FEEL HER STRENGTH INSIDE YER OWN.

4.

Butcher's no longer smiling, but he's just as sincere. Hughie's still riveted.

Butcher: AN' NEVER, EVER, EVER LET HER GO.

PAGE FIFTEEN

1.

Butcher lowers his gaze, smiles. Hughie watches him, fascinated.

Butcher: SEE, THAT WAS SOMETHIN' BECKY TOLD ME. I DIDN'T QUITE GET IT AT THE TIME.

" " BUT SHE SAID MEN WITHOUT WOMEN, IT WASN'T A GOOD IDEA. AN' SHE WAS RIGHT.

2.

Hughie, riveted.

Off: 'COS ALL THAT MACHO SHIT—THAT GUNFIGHTER, DIRTY HARRY BOLLOCKS—IT LOOKS GOOD, BUT IN THE END IT'S PRETTY FUCKIN' SELF-DEFEATIN'.

" " IT JUST LEAVES YOU WITH BODIES IN DITCHES AN' BLOKES WITH HEADFULS O' BROKEN GLASS.

3.

Butcher grins, warm and knowing. Twinkle in his eye, well aware of the meaning in what he says here.

Butcher: MEN ARE ONLY SO MUCH USE, HUGHIE.

" " MEN ARE BOYS.

4.

Butcher lowers his gaze, smiling a little, tired now. Hughie stares at him, quietly stunned.

5.

Hughie only, quietly but terribly sad.

Hughie: I… AW, JESUS.

" " I JUST WISH… THINGS…

PAGE SIXTEEN

1.

The pair are suddenly bathed in blinding light. Hughie throws an arm up to shield his eyes, but Butcher can only shut his.

Hughie: **JESUS--!**

2.

Big. A police helicopter hovers about fifty yards above and away from them, nose-mounted spotlight picking the two little figures out perfectly.

Hughie: CHRIST ALMIGHTY, THEY SCARED THE FUCKIN' SHITE OUTTA ME!

3.

The light flicks off again. Butcher suddenly looks grim, Hughie's still trying to blink the light out of his eyes.

Butcher: YEAH, AN' THEY'RE GONNA HAVE SWAT AN' PARAMEDICS UP HERE IN NO TIME.

Hughie: WHAT? FUCK, I CAN'T EVEN—

Butcher: NOT A MOMENT TO LOSE, HUGHIE.

4.

Hughie freezes, the helicopter banking away in the background.

Off: YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO KILL ME.

PAGE SEVENTEEN

1.

Hughie stares at Butcher, can't believe this. Butcher looks him right in the eye, grim, urgent.

Hughie: **WHAT…?**

Butcher: I'M FUCKIN' SERIOUS. I'VE BROKEN ME NECK HERE, I CAN'T FEEL A BLEEDIN' THING.

Hughie: WAIT A SECOND, NO, I--

Butcher: THEY'LL BANG ME UP FOR LIFE. I DON'T GIVE A FUCK ABOUT DOIN' THE TIME—BUT NOT TRAPPED IN ME OWN USELESS CARCASS, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

3.

Butcher smiles at us in disbelief.

Off: **THERE'S NO BLOODY WAY I'M—**

Butcher: HUGHIE, YOU AIN'T GONNA LEAVE ME HERE LIKE A FUCKIN' RASPBERRY RIPPLE, COME ON…!

4.

Hughie turns away, can't look at him, angry and shaken. Butcher stares at him.

Hughie: YOU DESERVE IT. **YOU FUCKIN' WELL DESERVE IT.**

Butcher: I MIGHT WELL DO, BUT IF YOU'RE GONNA PUNISH ME YOU COULD AT LEAST LOOK ME IN THE BLOODY EYE. OR ARE YOU GONNA LEAVE IT UP TO SOME OTHER CUNT TO DO YER DIRTY WORK?

4.

Hughie only, struggling not to lose it.

Off: HUGHIE—

Hughie: **NO!**

Off: **HUGHIE…**

Hughie: **NO--!**

5.

Hughie suddenly bursts into tears, loses it. Facing away from Butcher, who glares grimly at him from further back.

Hughie: THERE'S ONLY THE BLOOD TWO OF US LEFT, I'M NO' GONNA FUCKIN' PUT YOU DOWN LIKE A **DOG**…!

6.

Close up on Butcher, grim, meaningful.

Butcher: YEAH YOU FUCKIN' ARE, HUGHIE.

" " 'COS OF ANNIE JANUARY.

PAGE EIGHTEEN

1.

Hughie wipes away his tears, disgusted, not turning. Butcher glares at him.

Hughie: AW FOR FUCK'S SAKE, I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GONNA START IN ABOUT THAT! BUT OH AYE, THERE, YOU GO, THE SAME OLD EVIL BLOODY—

Butcher: NOT THE BIRD, SUNSHINE. I'M TALKIN' ABOUT YER DAD'S BOAT.

2.

Butcher only, grim, humourless smile sliding across his face.

Off: WH—

Butcher: HE CHANGED THE NAME. THAT'S HOW MUCH HE LIKED HER.

" " I SPIKED HIS HEAD ON THE END O' THE TILLER. AFTER I'D FINISHED SPREADIN' YER MUM ALL OVER HER KITCHEN.

3.

Hughie stares at him. He snarls back, savage.

Hughie: BOLLOCKS. **FUCKIN' BOLLOCKS**. THERE'S **NO WAY**…

Butcher: SEVEN WATKINS LANE, LAST HOUSE ON THE RIGHT. I READ YER FILE, REMEMBER?

" " YOU SHOULDN'T'VE PISSED ME OFF FUCKIN' ABOUT WITH MALLORY, MY SON. THAT WAS BANG OUTTA ORDER, YOU SHOULDN'T'VE GONE AN' DONE THAT.

4.

Hughie only, sliding over the edge of horror and into madness.

Off: WHAT D'YOU WANNA HEAR ABOUT? THE WANKY BLOODY SEVENTIES WALLPAPER, OR THE STUPID OLD CUNT'S PIPE?

" " OR WHAT ABOUT THAT PONCEY FUCKIN' POEM UP ON THE WALL O' YER BEDROOM, FUCK ME, DID I HAVE A RIGHT LAUGH AT THAT…!

5.

Butcher only, smiling savagely, hatefully at us.

Butcher: LOOK AT ME. FUCKIN' **LOOK AT ME**.

" " **YOU KNOW I DONE IT.**

PAGE NINETEEN

1.

Hughie screams and punches Butcher in the face, snapping his head round, blood flying.

Hughie: **FUCKER!**

2.

Hughie's lost it completely. He pulls the spiked iron bar out of his leg in one dreadful, tearing, wrenching yank, spraying blood everywhere.

Hughie: **FUCKER!**

3.

Butcher looks up at us, sees what's going to happen but barely has time to react. Eyes and mouth starting to open.

Off: **CUNT!!**

PAGE TWENTY

1.

Big. Hughie seethes like a madman and rams the spike deep into the amazed Butcher's chest, getting him right through the heart.

2.

They stare at each other, both completely astonished. Hughie's ire is instantly gone.

3.

Butcher smiles up at us with the love and fondness of a long lost brother.

Butcher: NICE ONE, MATE.

4.

Hughie panics and rummages through Butcher's inside coat pocket, desperate. We won't see Butcher's face again 'til the last page, but he's dead from here on.

5.

Hughie taps desperately at the phone, leaving the body slumped behind him.

6.

Close up as he sticks the phone to his ear, screams in desperation.

Jag: HULLO…?

Hughie: **MAW!!**

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

1.

Hughie kneels in the blood pumping from his leg, one hand clamped over it, the other holding the phone to his ear. Utterly desperate. He partially blocks our view of Butcher.

Jag: **HUGHIE…!**

" " ECK! ECK! IT'S HUGHIE ON THE PHONE!

Hughie: **MAW! JESUS FUCKIN' CHRIST, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT--?**

2.

Close up as Hughie cringes in disbelief.

Jag: OCH, SON, YE KEN I DON'T LIKE YE USIN' THAT SORT OF OUL' TALK, NOW…

Hughie: MAW, **PLEASE** JUST TELL ME YOU AN' PAW ARE OKAY…!

3.

He freezes in horror.

Jag: O' COURSE WE ARE, WHY WOULDN'T WE BE? OCH, DYE KEN WE HAD YER FRIEND HERE LAST YEAR, MISTER BUTCHER…?

4.

View past Butcher's feet at Hughie.

Hughie: WHAT… DID HE…

Jag: OH, HE WAS AN AWFULLY NICE MAN. AN' SO FUNNY, HIM AN' YER PAW GOT ON LIKE A HOOSE ON FIRE.

" " HE SAID HE WAS IN THE AREA AN' HE THOUGHT HE'D SEE WHERE YE GREW UP. WE SHOWED HIM ALL ROUND THE PLACE.

5.

Hughie only, frozen, stunned.

Jag: HE TOLD US HE WAS SORT O' YER BOSS, BUT I MUST SAY HE SEEMED VERY FOND O' YE.

" " HE ASKED US TO TELL YE HE SAID HELLO. I'M NO' SURE WHY, I THOUGHT HE'D PROBABLY SEE YE SOONER'N WE DID.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

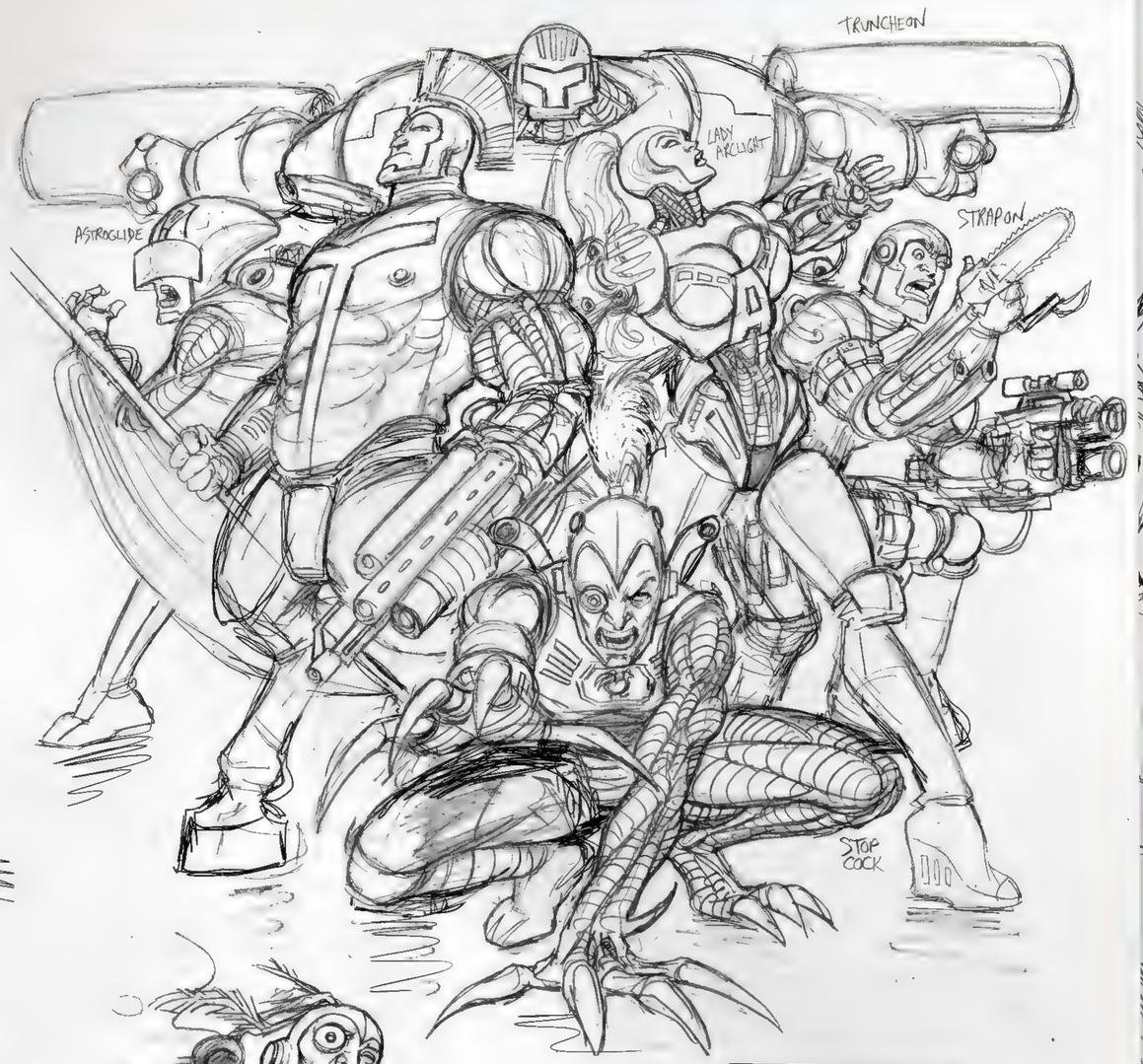
1.

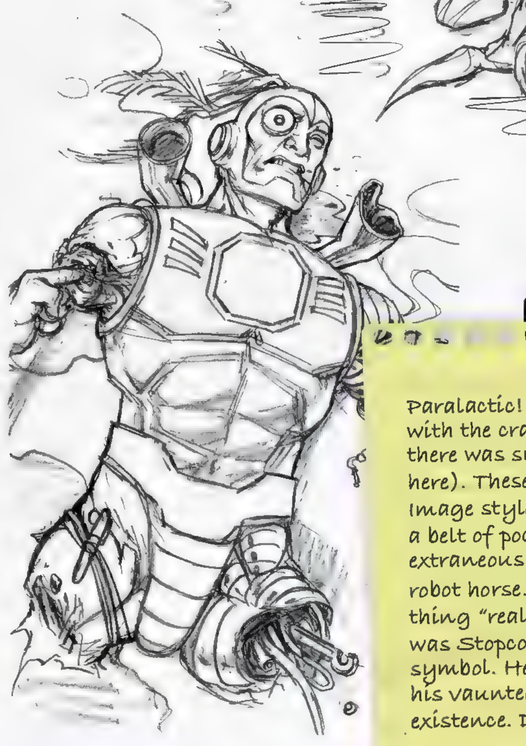
Hughie kneels in the blood and stares ahead with his hand clamped over his grisly leg wound, quietly but completely astonished. Phone forgotten in his hand, held low at his side. Butcher lies dead behind him with the same smile on his face, eyes closed, happy rather than dark or malevolent- looking for all the world like he's laughing to himself at one last joke.

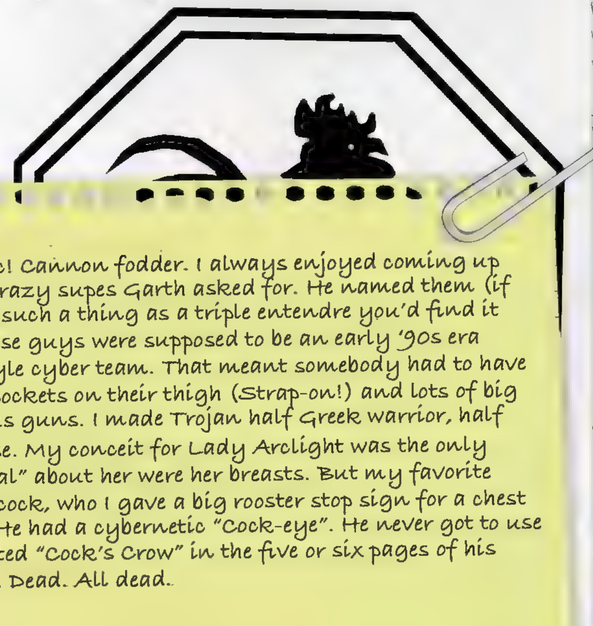
Jag: AWFULLY NICE MAN.

" " HERE, ECK, D'YE WANT TO SAY HULLO TO HUGHIE?

THE END

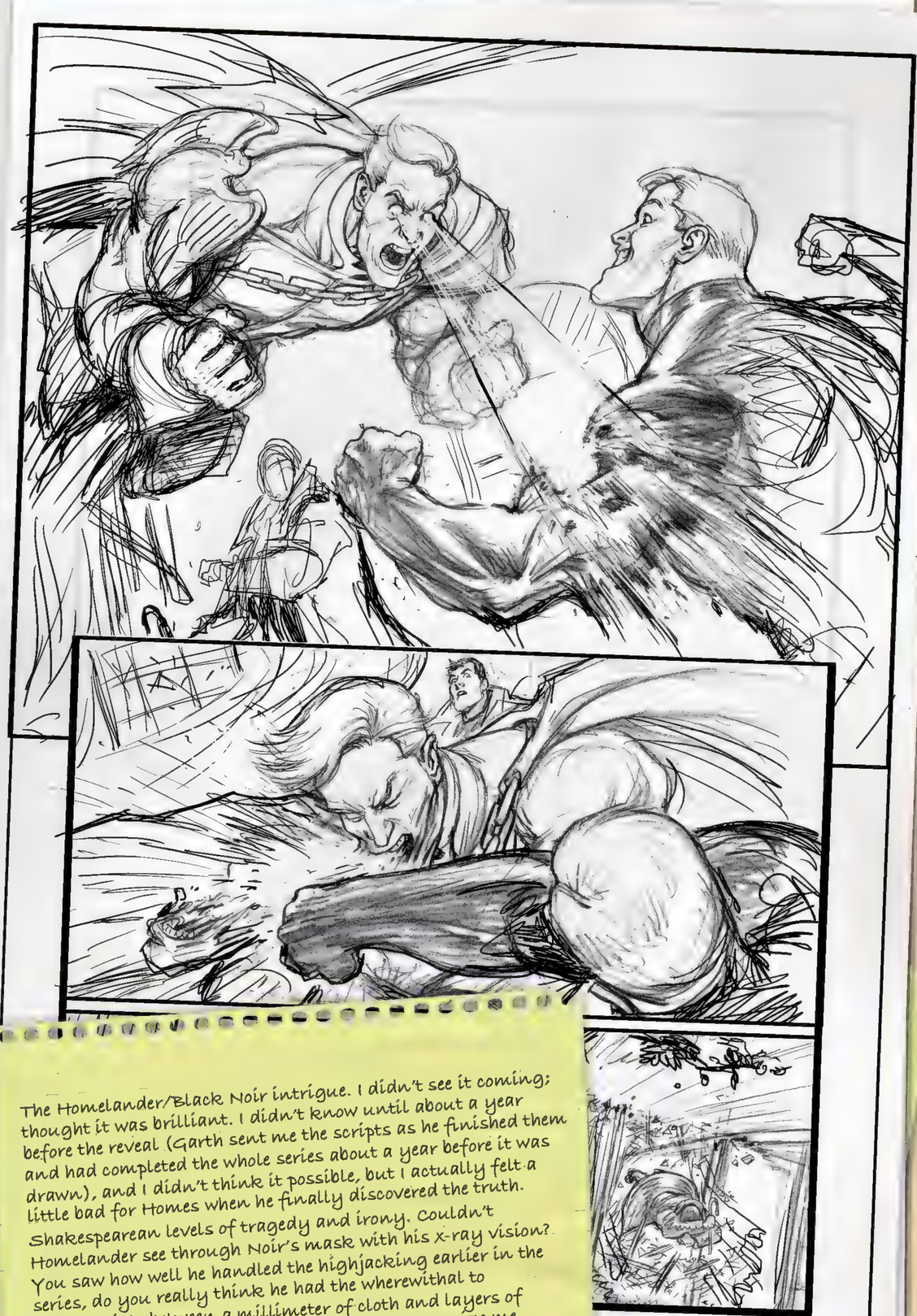






Paralactic! Cannon fodder. I always enjoyed coming up with the crazy supes Garth asked for. He named them (if there was such a thing as a triple entendre you'd find it here). These guys were supposed to be an early '90s era Image style cyber team. That meant somebody had to have a belt of pockets on their thigh (Strap-on!) and lots of big extraneous guns. I made Trojan half Greek warrior, half robot horse. My conceit for Lady Arclight was the only thing "real" about her were her breasts. But my favorite was Stopcock, who I gave a big rooster stop sign for a chest symbol. He had a cybernetic "Cock-eye". He never got to use his vaunted "Cock's Crow" in the five or six pages of his existence. Dead. All dead.

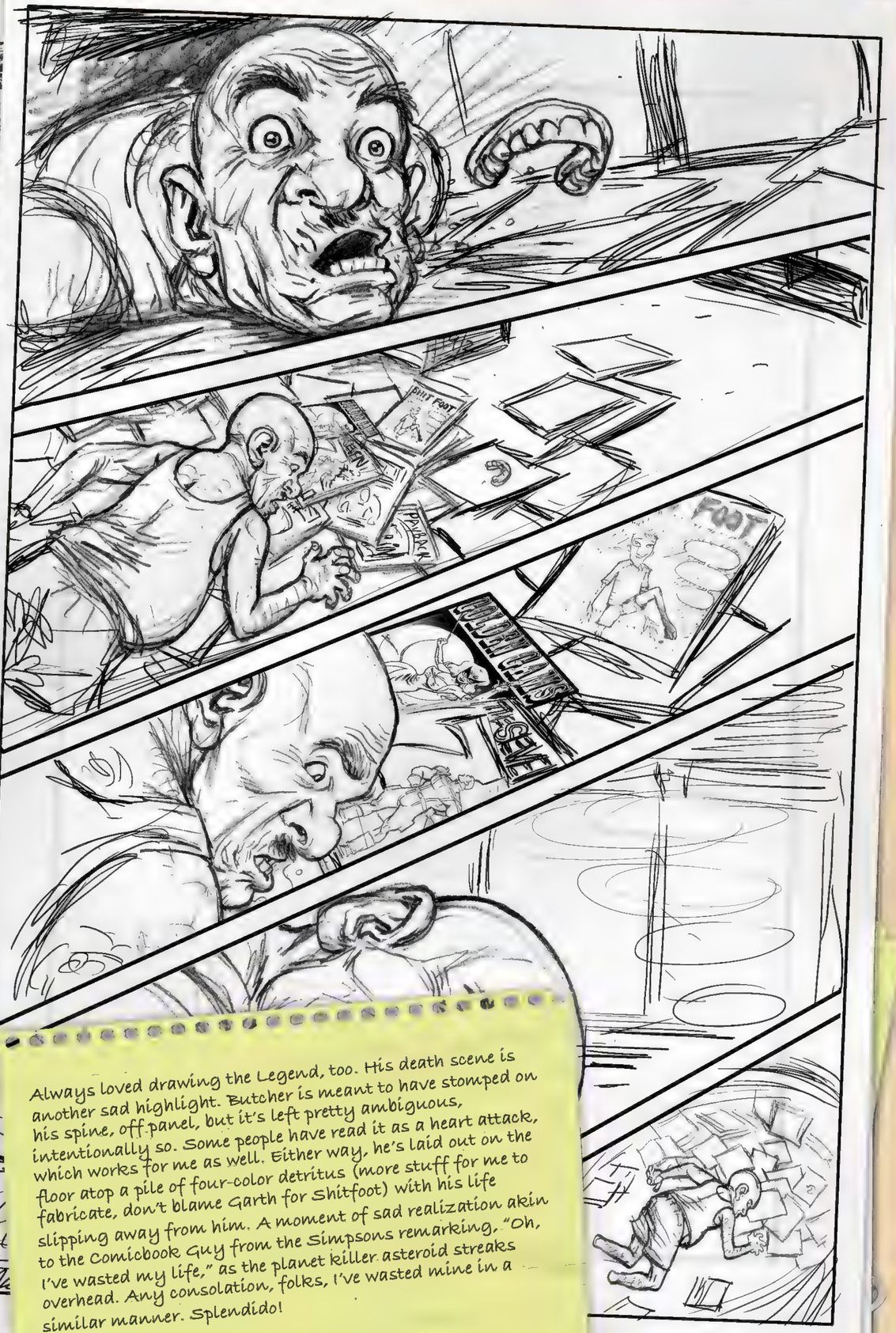
Team Titanic! Cannon Fodder, part deux. Pretty obviously based on a certain teen superteam gone to seed, with other hangers on and amalgams. Another chance for some glorious ultra violence, a chance to see Frenchie and the Female in brutal action. But also a reminder: as pathetic and inept as most of these supes are, they also have a great deal of power, and a lucky shot costs Frenchie dearly. Some favorite bits: the Female jumping through Dry Hump, the name Snaffletwat, and the fact that Gumchum, who does nothing but offer people gum, escapes the carnage unscathed and is last seen in the background lounging on a couch, blowing a bubble.



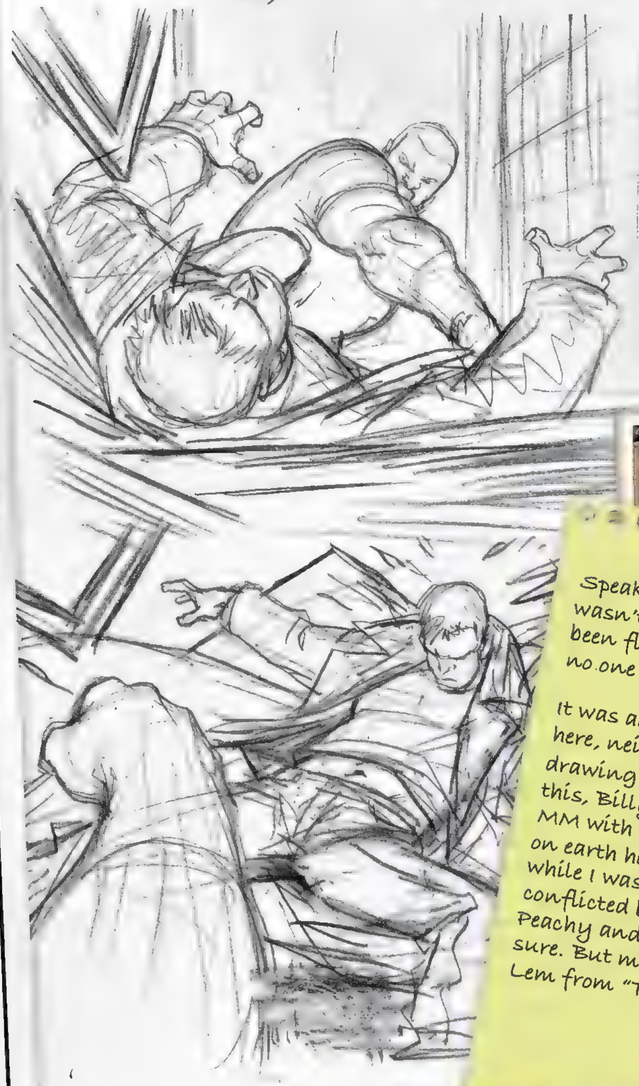
The Homelander/Black Noir intrigue. I didn't see it coming; thought it was brilliant. I didn't know until about a year before the reveal (Garth sent me the scripts as he finished them and had completed the whole series about a year before it was drawn), and I didn't think it possible, but I actually felt a little bad for Homes when he finally discovered the truth. Shakespearean levels of tragedy and irony. Couldn't Homelander see through Noir's mask with his x-ray vision? You saw how well he handled the highjacking earlier in the series, do you really think he had the wherewithal to differentiate between a millimeter of cloth and layers of flesh, muscle, bone and brain to see a face? No prize me, true believer!

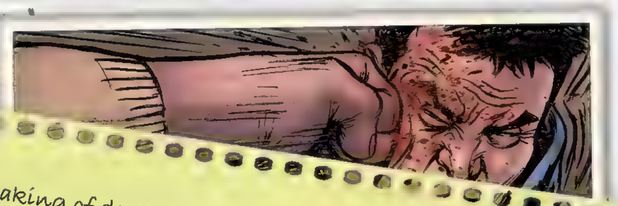
Frenchie and the Female, what more can I say? Every scene with the pair of them was a pleasure to draw. So much absurdity, and yet so much emotion, insanity and heart. One day I'll convince Garth to revisit them in an "untold tale from the files of The Boys"; maybe a reconnaissance mission on China's supe program gone horribly awry...

Or maybe they didn't really die! We never saw the bodies, or ...well, collected enough teeth for a proper dental identification... OK. They're dead. Au revoir, mes amis.



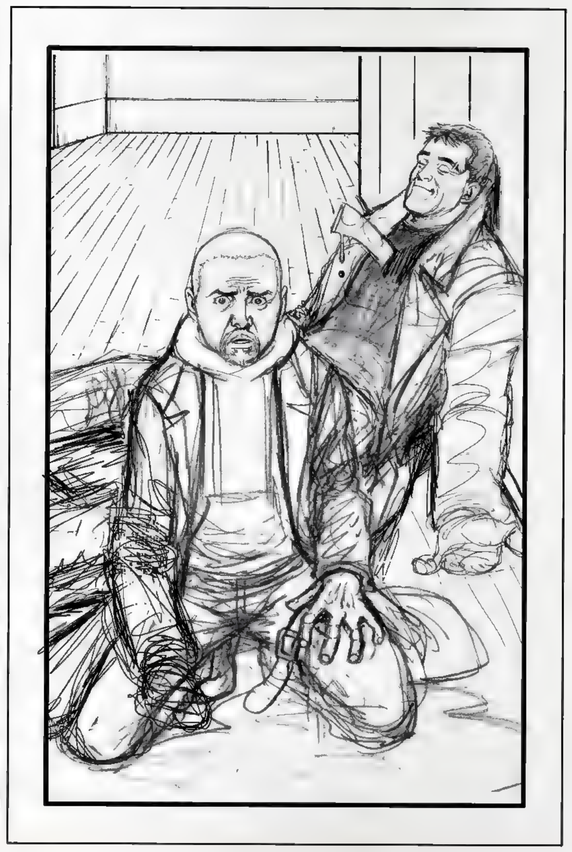
Always loved drawing the Legend, too. His death scene is another sad highlight. Butcher is meant to have stomped on his spine, off-panel, but it's left pretty ambiguous, intentionally so. Some people have read it as a heart attack, which works for me as well. Either way, he's laid out on the floor atop a pile of four-color detritus (more stuff for me to fabricate, don't blame Garth for Shitfoot) with his life slipping away from him. A moment of sad realization akin to the Comicbook Guy from the Simpsons remarking, "Oh, I've wasted my life," as the planet killer asteroid streaks overhead. Any consolation, folks, I've wasted mine in a similar manner. Splendido!





Speaking of death, MM's demise was particularly brutal, wasn't it? Really a turning point for Butcher. The switch had been flipped earlier, but now there's no turning back. And no one is safe.

It was an emotional scene to draw. It's brother vs. brother here, neither man wants this fight. And I'm looking at my drawing of Butcher thinking, "Are you really going to do this, Billy?" There's the moment where Butcher smiles up at MM with genuine love for the man, probably the only man on earth he actually respects, that honestly choked me up while I was working on it. You don't get that type of conflicted but bone deep friendship often enough in fiction. Peachy and Danny in "The Man Who Would be King" for sure. But maybe a better analogy would be Shane and Lem from "The Shield"...



And that's a wrap. It was an honor and a privilege to work on The Boys. But to tell the truth, at the very start, I didn't want to do it. Working with friends can be a great thing, but it can also go horribly, horribly wrong. There was added pressure there. Additionally, I'd been a big fan of the book from the beginning. Darick had co-created the whole thing and set the style, the style the readership expected when they picked up the book. I always read everything Garth wrote (even easier when he handed me comp copies every week at our regular watering hole) and The Boys was always my favorite. So basically, if I screwed up I could ruin my favorite book and my friendship with Garth in one fell swoop. But they were in a deadline crunch on the upcoming "Believe" arc and I figured, "Well four issues and I'm out, how much damage could I do...?" Garth said, "What's the worst that could happen?" a line he usually reserves for one last whiskey for the road...

Ultimately, the damage or benefit is debatable, but one thing led to another and here we are. I drew Butcher four or five times in a sketchbook and hated every one, trying too hard. Then I relaxed and drew a profile shot of him kind of looking up with a small, sly grin that said "I've got you, pal" and I found that I did as well. I started to find my feet during the first four issues and settled into a place, and a pace, where I felt I could bring something of my own to the book without jarring regular readers out of the world of The Boys. After that it felt natural and I started to just enjoy the ride. We ran the storytelling gamut from pitch black humor to genuine pathos and beyond and I'm all the better for it. I got to draw some pivotal issues, some amazing scenes, some stuff that might even give this journeyman comicbook artist at least a footnote in comics history.

I'd like to thank Garth: for the amazing story and for inviting me along for the ride. Thanks also to Nick, Joe, Jason and the Dynamite team for their confident editorial style. Thanks to Simon Bowland for always getting it spot on and always making me look like an old pro, and Tony Aviña for putting up with all the last minute, picky color corrections to bring it all together brilliantly in living color. And most of all, to those of you who read it, appreciated my part of it and told me so, I reserve the biggest thanks of all.

Best,
Russ

BUTCHER by RUSS BRAUN

HUGHIE by JOHN McCREA

THE FEMALE by
CARLOS EZQUERRA
EZQUERRA

MOTHER'S MILK by
JOHN HIGGINS

THE FRENCHMAN by
PETER SNEJBJERG

BUTCHER by
RUSS BRAUN

GARTH ENNIS

Garth Ennis has been writing comics since 1989. Credits include *Preacher*, *Hitman*, *Crossed*, *Rover Red Charlie*, *Code Pru*, *Caliban*, *War Stories*, *A Walk Through Hell* and *Sara*, and successful runs on *The Punisher* and *Fury* for Marvel Comics. Originally from Northern Ireland, Ennis now resides in New York City with his wife, Ruth.

DARICK ROBERTSON

Darick Robertson is an American comic book artist, writer and creator with a decades long career in the industry. Born and raised in the Northern California Bay Area and self trained as an artist, his notable works include co-creating the award winning *Transmetropolitan*, *The Boys*, *Happy!*, and *Oliver* with Gary Whitta for Image Comics, debuting in January 2019. Darick has illustrated for both Marvel and DC Comics on characters including Batman, The Justice League, Wolverine, The Punisher, and Spider-man.

JOHN McCREA

Artist John McCrea was born in Belfast, and has worked extensively in the British and American comic book industries. He previously worked with writer Garth Ennis on *Troubled Souls*, *For a Few Troubles More*, *Judge Dredd*, *The Demon*, *Hitman*, *Dicks*, *Chopper,* and *All Star Section Eight*. He can be found online at www.johnmccrea.com

KEITH BURNS

Keith Burns has drawn the war comics *Castles in the Sky* and *Out of the Blue*, as well as the successful revival of classic British character *Johnny Red*. He is a member of the Guild of Aviation Artists. Originally from Dublin, Ireland, Burns now resides in England.

RUSS BRAUN

New York native Russ Braun has been drawing comics for twenty-five years, with time out for a seven year stint at Disney Feature Animation. Mostly working for DC/Vertigo on everything from *Batman: Venom* to *Jack of Fables*, he also worked on *Hellstorm: Son of Satan* for Marvel Max, *Jimmy's Bastards* for Aftershock, *The Boys*, and three series of *Battlefields* with Garth Ennis for Dynamite.

TONY AVIÑA

Tony Aviña got his start as an in-house colorist at WIldwtorm. His credits include *Sleeper*, *Stormwatch: Team Achilles*, *Authority: Prime*, *Battlefields*, *The Boys*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Green Lantern*, *Justice League*, *Batman '66*, *Wonder Woman '77*, and *Suicide Squad: Hell to Pay*. He currently lives in St. Louis, which, contrary to popular belief, isn't one big farm (it's actually three or four moderately sized farms).

SIMON BOWLAND

Simon Bowland has been lettering comics since 2004, and in that time has worked for all of the mainstream publishers. Born and bred in the UK, Simon still lives there today alongside Pippa, his partner, and Jess, their tabby cat.

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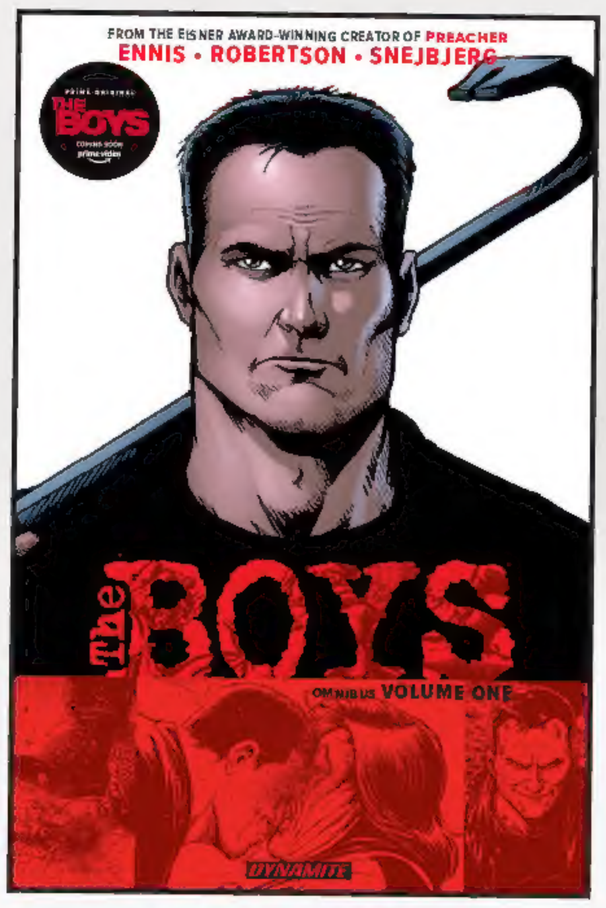

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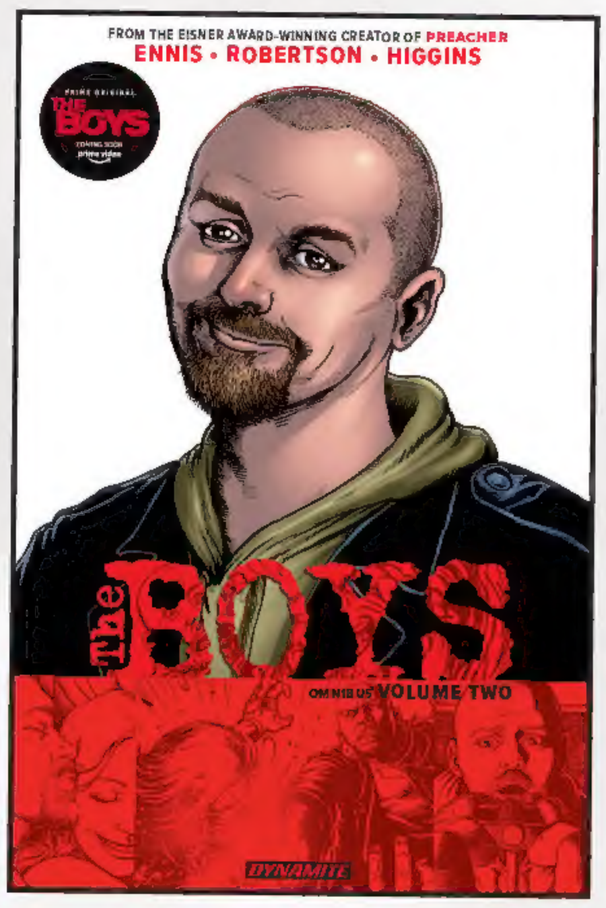

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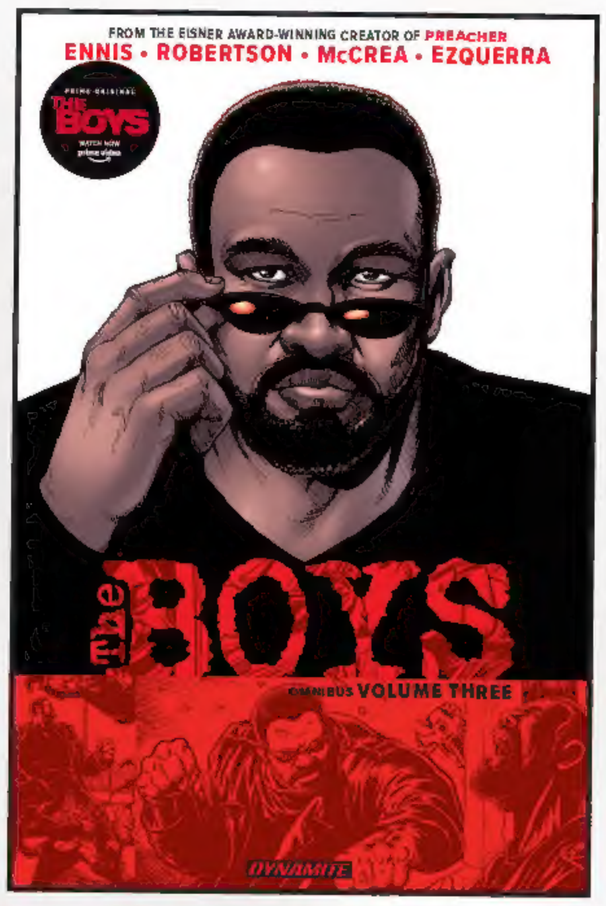

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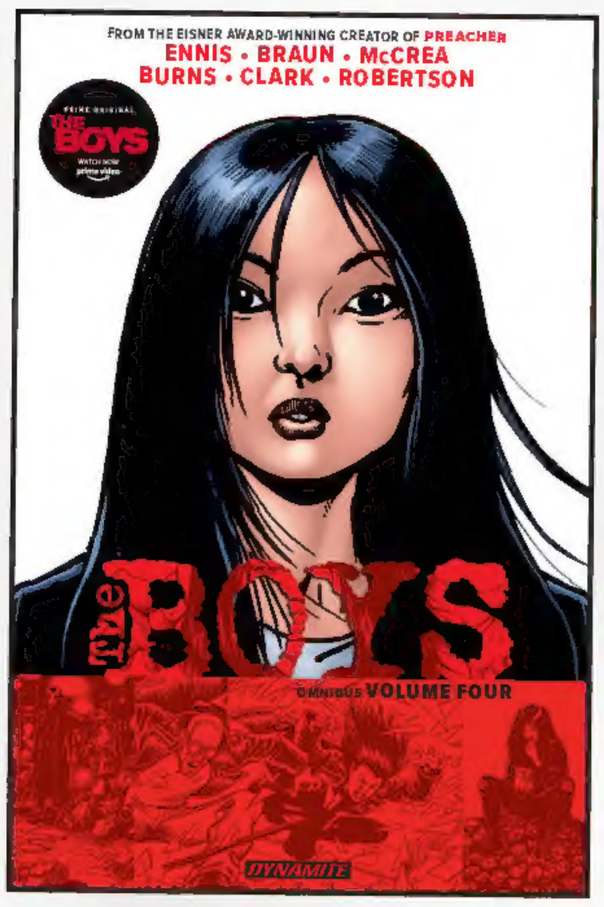

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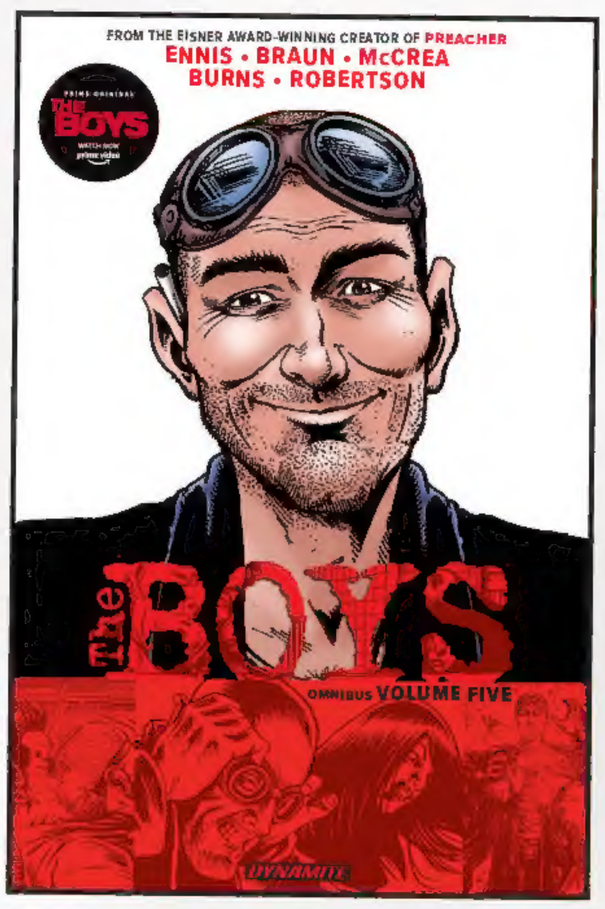

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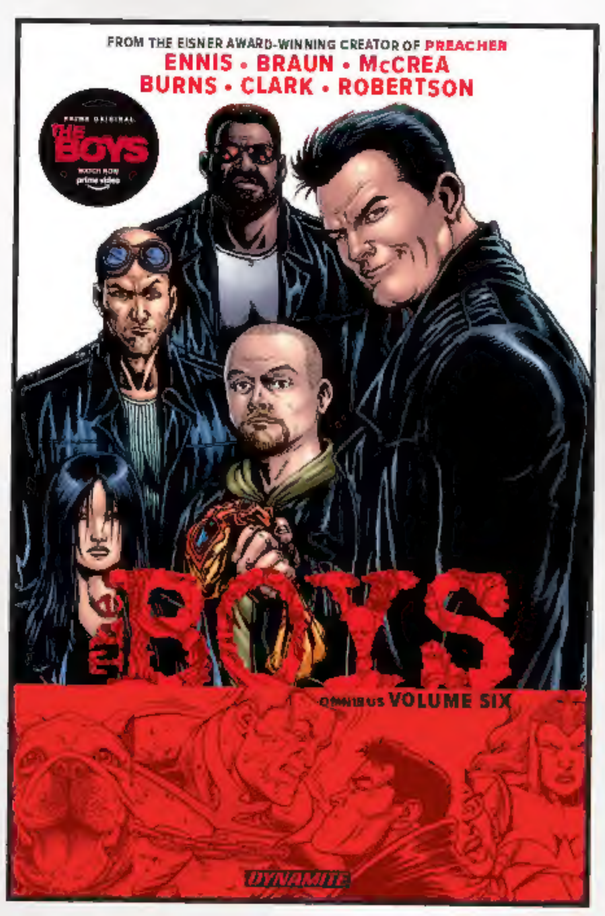

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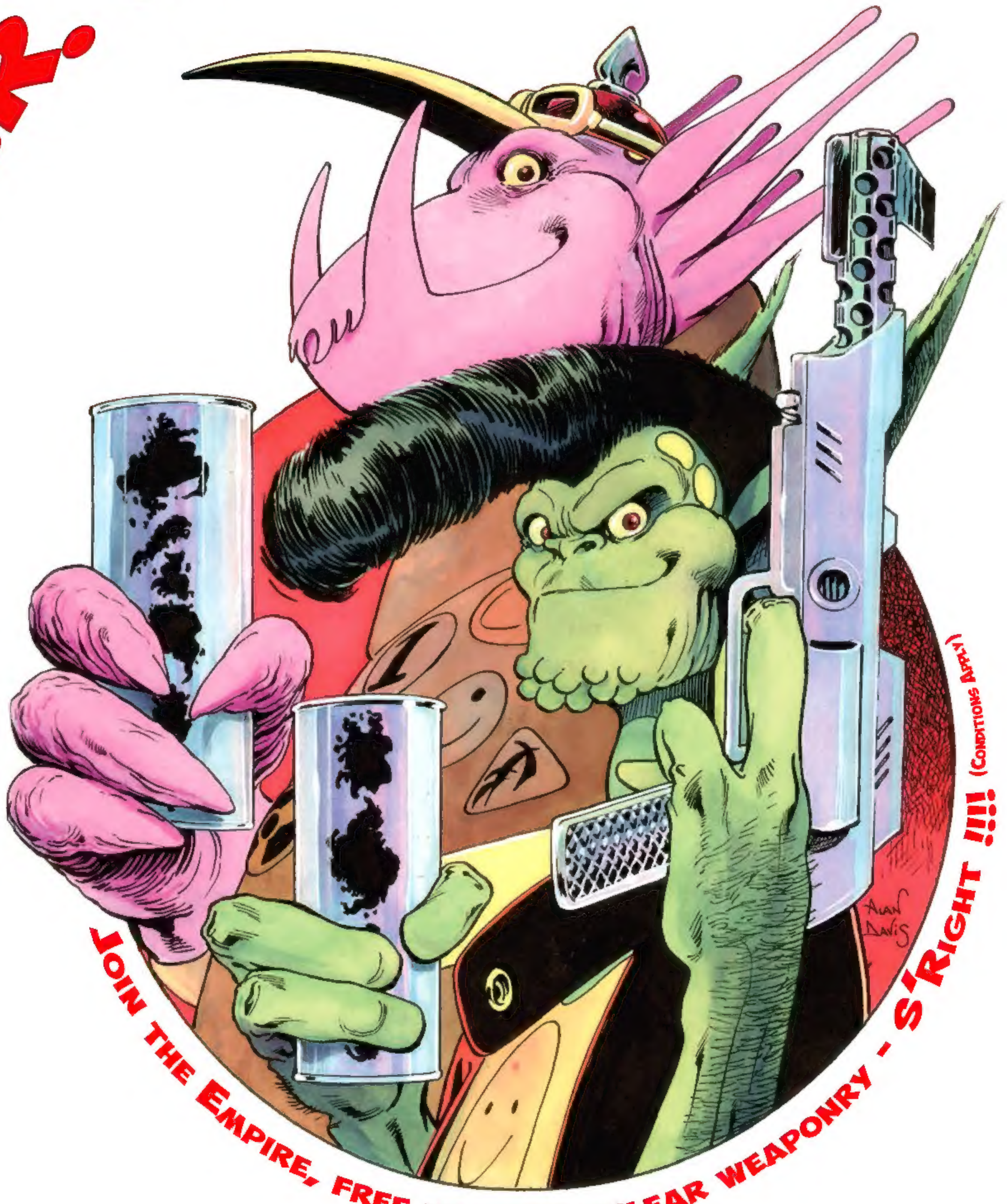

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